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J. Dunbar Hylton

ARTELOISE.

A ROMANCE

OF

KING ARTHUR AND KNIGHTS OF
THE ROUND TABLE;

✓
BY

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DEDICATION.

TO MY SON.

Among the many races found
Within wide Nature's spacious bound
Breathes there a maiden or a youth,
Or aged dame, or man, forsooth,
Who does not lend a willing ear
Strange stories of the Past to hear?
Though they be wild and void of truth
As is a rock of love or ruth,
Be wild as ever Fiction drew,
Or in Romance's regions grew,
If in the tale were love and woe,
And pains and joys we mortals know,
And feel and love or hate and fear,
The story finds a willing ear.
The Arabian Nights shall please
Both old and young, on land or seas,
While ages on their flight proceed
As in the past, where man can read.
Though Homer's songs three thousand years
Have sounded on the human ears,
Three thousand years to come and more
His songs shall sound on every shore,
Wherever breathes a human soul
Whose feeling noble thoughts control.
He'll be the rich, exhaustless mine,
Where delighted sport the Sacred Nine.
When but a boy behind my plow
I sang his songs, and sing them now;
Nor shall he ever cease to charm
Me through all toil, and it disarm

Of weariness, and pain and care,
And all that doth make wear and tear
On human tissue, but keep me strong,
While toiling I shall sing his song.
Oft when a boy my teachers sought
On Euclid's page to bind my thought,
In problems there my mind involve



Archimedes might gladly solve.
Away from them I swiftly slid,
Within the woods all day I hid,
And read Shah Nameh or the Cid,
Or, foodless, there I dwelt all day,
Feasting on the Nibelungen Lay.
Tasso's or Virgil's songs I read,

Or tales of Dante filled my head ;
Nor in those days I e'er forgot
The immortal poet, Walter Scott.
But all the bards of ancient time,
Or modern days, whate'er their rhyme,
Of Southern or of Northern clime,
Of lands throughout the East or West,
Old Ossian I then loved the best.



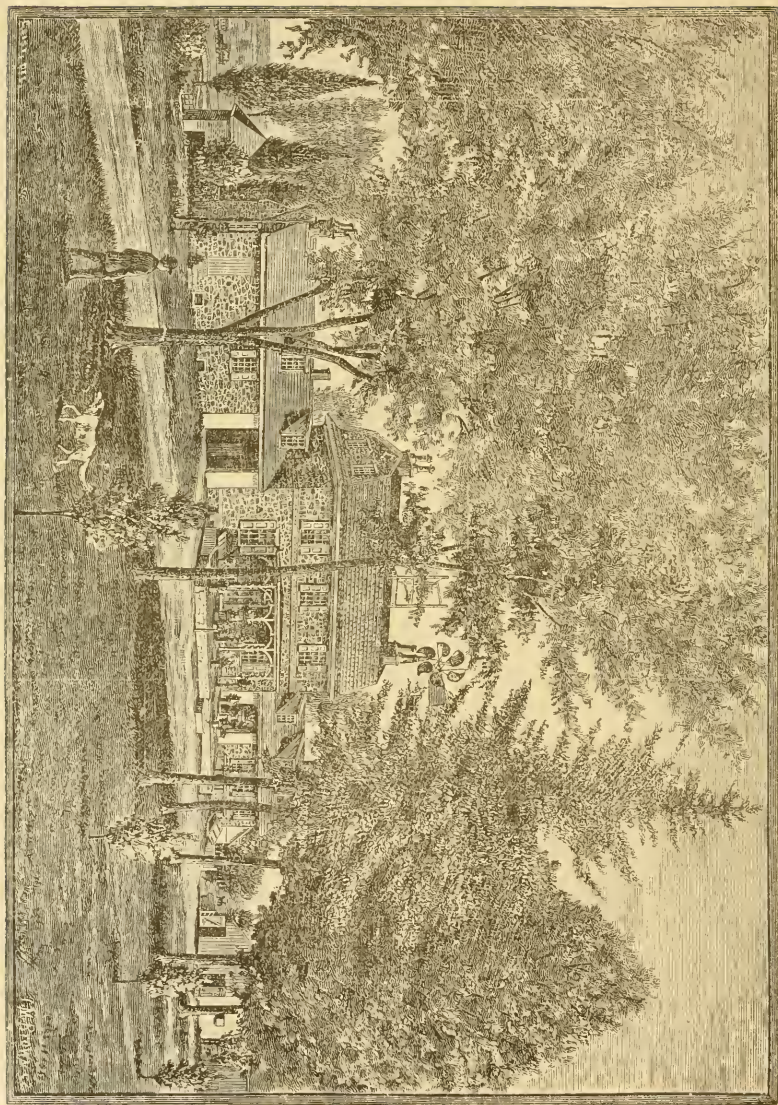
He was my solace, my delight,
My joy by day, my dream by night.
The more I conned him o'er and o'er
The more he warmed my bosom's core.
His tales of love, and war, and woe,
Made all my soul with wonder glow.
Whole days and nights did Ossian's page

Enraptured all my soul engage.
Fingal's great deeds, in war and peace,
His triumphs, his glory's grand increase,
My boyish soul with daring fraught,
Till seemed beside that king I fought ;
Seemed I rushed with Ossian o'er the field,
And met the battle on my bossy shield ;
Stood by the tuneful warrior's side,
And wept with him when noble Oscar died.
No matter what or how we sing,
Or strike the lyre's sounding string,
If short or long, we make the line
When come in aid the tuneful Nine,
If we some noble feelings bring
Within the tales we tell or sing—
Something to move the joy or woe,
Or yearnings that we mortals know,
No matter if we limn the form
Of the grim spirit of the storm,
Place him on heights stupendous hurled,
Midst clouds above a moving world,
His meteor-banner there unfurled
To storms and lightnings round him twirled
Or place him on the ocean's wave,
To give the bounding bark its grave,
So that we fill the human soul
With wonder, pity, joy or dole ;
Teach there's a path that should be trod
By mortals that leads up to God,
Where they shall view the final end—
One Judge, one God, one Father, Friend ;
Or if we limn the rainbow's form
At eve, amidst the dying storm,
And paint the hills with sunset glow,
While floods his beams of glory show,

While skipping lambs and grazing sheep
All peaceful throned the grassy steep,
And shepherds watchful vigils keep;
Or paint with every rural charm
The pleasures on a Jersey farm,
Where every joy of mortal life
Around has Nature scattered rife;
Or lead the reader through a vale,
Flowers all sides the eye assail,
Into the fields of choicest fruits,
To pluck whate'er his fancy suits,
No matter what we tell or sing,
So strictly we to Nature cling—
Nature, man's mortal, final goal,
When God emancipates his soul;
Nature that unto dust shall bring
His form and every mortal thing,
And scatter on the tempest's pride
His dust o'er all her regions wide;
And who at last shall bow her head,
And, hoary, slumber with the dead—
That path be by her spirit trod
That brings us face to face with God.
Some mortals on this planet dwell
Who doubt all things that poets tell,
Believe no more that Arthur lived
Than mountains through a screen were sieved
Of meshes half an inch in size
Ere they did from earth's surface rise,
Though they were just as huge and vast
As now when they those meshes past.
They even doubt this spacious earth
From the Almighty had its birth,
That it alone through Chance was born,
And all the worlds that space adorn;

But who is Chance? Who did all this?
Who formed all Space's vast abyss?
How Chance did into being move
And make all things they cannot prove,
And when we all their theories view,
And search and sift them through and through,
We find their theories all unsound,
And they the only liars found.
That Arthur lived I well believe,
It a historic truth receive,
And see no more to doubt in him
Than fish do in the waters swim,
Or birds fly through the yielding air,
Or earth blooms with its flowers fair,
Or storms the waves of ocean roll
With force no mortal can control;
Or that the hills my hands can lift,
And them from off their bases shift.
Or I the sun could drag to earth,
And place him on my little hearth;
Or I could stop the Comet's car,
And load it with the Polar Star.
Yea, let the skeptics doubt the birth
Of good King Arthur on this earth,
Deny him all his fame and worth,
And prowess of unmeasured girth;
We'll war 'gainst them both day and night,
And we shall conquer in the fight.
My son, the winds are wild and shrill,
They drive the snow o'er glen and hill;
The night with all its clouds is stored,
And not a planet is abroad;
Deep darkness fills all sky and space,
And over all of Nature's face
No object through the night we trace.

But let the night be as it will,
And blasts scream over moor and hill,
Warm beside our blazing hearth,
We'll listen to the tempest's mirth;
Be just as happy and as gay
As winds that rough the forests sway.
Come, let's broach the ruddy wine,
Drink healths unto the Sacred Nine,
And to the Spirit of the Soil,
Who ever doth reward man's toil.
Hail to the Spirit of the Land,
Who gives us food on every hand,
Who fills the earth with germs of life,
And crowns it all with fruitage rife;
Who makes the vine on hill and field
Its purple, ample harvest yield,
From which we press the luscious wine,
Which fills the veins with glow divine—
Hail! hail to Ceres ever blest!
May every bliss her heart invest!
The goddess of the wholesome corn,
That doth with vigor man adorn,
That gives him muscle, brain and bone,
And spirit of a lofty tone;
Hail to the goddess, all divine,
And to her daughter, Proserpine,
Who crown the earth with corn and wine!
Who make the vine yield well and live
When man it proper care will give.
My song unto its end has run,
And now its dedication's done.
Come, bring the wine; 'tis Christmas Eve,
Maids round the altars flowers weave;
To-morrow brings the happy morn
The Saviour of this World was born.



A JERSEY FARM

ARTELOISE.

PART I.

I.

A story of our fathers

In the misty days of old,

Their deeds of daring and their tourneys,

Their battles fierce and bold;

Their high feasts and merry meetings,

Their love, their hate, their joys and woes,

And of their dread necromancers

This ancient story shall disclose.

And how in Etna's fiery caves,

Within the mighty Cyclops' den,

Were forged on thundering anvils,

Immortal arms for godlike men.

The shield no earthly spear could pierce,

The breakless, adamantine helm,

The sword and axe, that aye in fight

Would every enemy o'erwhelm.

The morion before whose sheen

The hardest foemen quail,

By the light it threw, full well they knew

Immortal Vulcan forged the mail.

And how in rocky caves of hills,

Guarded safe by dragons bold,

Lie enormous hoarded treasures

Of glittering gems and gold.

And how a knight of fearless prowess,

With soul untouched by mortal sin,

As prophesied by Merlin's breath,
Did the countless treasure win.
Of gallant knights and ladies fair,
Whom grisly giants sought to wrong;
Of courts of kings and castles strange,
I yet shall tell you in this song.

II.

A king in ancient Britain reigned,
For high valor far renowned;
Before him no greater hero lived,
And since no greater can be found.
He ruled o'er all merry England,
Fair Scotland, Ireland, and Wales,
And many Islands of the deep
The far distant sea assails.
In peace and war was he renowned,
And good King Arthur was his name;
O'er Christendom where mortal lived
Was spread wide his deathless fame.
And many knights and chiefs had he,
Of mighty prowess and of worth,
Whose gallant deeds of hardihood
Ever shall be sung on earth;
Their many battles, fierce and bold,
With proud princes and with kings;
With monsters, dreadful to behold,
Dragons and infernal things,
Shall down the corridors of time,
Come on poet's deathless song,
And how they, aye, upbuoyed the right,
And bore ever down the wrong.

How day and night in armour bright,
They ever sought for perils new;
To crush the cruel, faithless, vile—
Aid the noble, good, and true.

III.

There was Lancelot de Lake,
With glittering sword and shield,
Who, aye, ready was for lady's sake
His conquering blade to wield.
And Sir Tristram, the bold and strong,
The proud, fear-defying chief,
Who ever warr'd 'gainst others' wrong,
Soothed and lessened others' grief.
There was Gawaine, Kings Bore and Ban,
All desperate men in fray;
And Bedivere, who, in the van
Of glory, shone both night and day.
And there was Percivale, the famed,
With the helmet crushing mace;
And gallant Lionell, who claimed,
In field and foray, foremost place.
There was Galahad, the divine,
Loved of angels and the Lord;
Who hung upon religions' shrine,
All the trophies of his sword.
There was Agloval, of giant limb,
There was Tor, and Pelinore;
All knights in peril, bold and grim,
And full a thousand heroes more
Who made renowned the Table Round;
For knights of prowess and of worth—

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Whose fame through fleeting times hall go
 'Till deeds heroic fade from earth.
True knights who by King Arthur's side,
 Full, twelve times, in bloody fray,
Crushed down the Roman ranks of pride;
 And overwhelmed them with dismay.
Save King Arthur, of all that Train,
 For deeds of hardihood and worth
Was none like valiant Beau de Main
 'Mongst all the heroes of the earth.
True knight was he to friend or foe,
 In time of peace and battle grim;
A heart more true in weal or woe,
 Ne'er sent blood through human limb.
He was the knight of prowess bold,
 And of sin untainted soul;
Whom the voice of Merlin had foretold,
 Should the power alone control
That should slay the dragon fierce and grim,
 Within a cavern dark and drear;
And monsters of gigantic limb
 That guarded hoarded treasures there.
And bring the hoard from out that den,
 With spirit void of mortal fears—
Though it had hidden been from men,
 Twice one thousand fleeting years.

IV.

A royal feast at Camelot,
 Had the noble Arthur spread,
Nor was there a single knight forgot
 Who did glory's pathway tread;

All knights renowned of the Table Round,
And kings were gathered there, I ween,
There many a comely knight was found
And many a courteous queen;
The morning fair midst tourney sports,
Had most blithely past away,
The din throughout King Arthur's courts
Had sprightly rung of mimic fray;
The ground where it had been all strown,
With wreck'd and splintered spears was seen,
And plumes of every color known
With these were spread o'er all the green.
Had storms of lightning and of hail,
Fiercely over woodlands past,
And countless branches strown the gale,
And broken on the earth had cast;
And there unnumbered flowers brought
Of all shape and size and hue,
And strewing them 'midst limbs had sought
To hide the grassy earth from view;
It had resembled much the ground
Where had past that mimic fray,
Where shivered spears were cast around,
And torn plumes unnumbered lay;
And that grand morning's tourney prize
The gallant Beau de Main had won,
He 'neath King Arthur's judging eyes
The knightliest deeds had done;
And never breathed a man on earth
More fitter than that gallant king,
To judge a hero's knightly worth,
And deed of skill in tourney ring.

A mighty helm of flashing steel,
With purest ruddy gold inlaid,
That o'er it waving plumes reveal
That day as prize the Monarch made.
And on the head of Beau de Main
Was placed that helm by Arthur's hand,
While joyous shouts from all his Train
Reechoed loud across the land;
The fairest of the maidens there
Forthstepped from out the female crowd,
With wreath as fair as queen could wear,
On knee to her the hero bowed;
Firm on his head the wreath was placed,
Where waved the towering plumes above;
Then spoke the maid, A wreath ne'er graced
Chief fitter maiden's faith, and love;
And I have crowned thee here, Sir Knight
Champion of the Chaste and fair,
May virtue be thy guiding light,
And woman's honor be thy care.

V.

All knights renowned of the Table Round
Have thronged unto the festive board,
Ceased is the clanging armor's sound,
And ringing clash of spear and sword,
With sparkling wave the cups are crowned,
For in them ruddy wine is poured;
And not a care-worn face is found
From humblest knight to proudest lord.
All is merry feasting, joy and mirth,
In every stir and sight and sound,
Nor happier scenes has witnessed earth
Since ever hero kings were crowned,

By knights where e'er the eye may go,
Are all beauteous maidens seen,
The best the whole wide world can show
In comeliness of face and mien.
Each gallant baron, king and knight,
Has his fair partner by his side,
For whose fair name and honor bright
He unto deed of death would ride.
The fair Guenever ever blest
With sweetest charms in beauty stored,
Sits with heart at ease and soul at rest,
Beside her loved and loving lord;
But those who'd know each beauteous guest
That sat around that spacious board,
Let them through Arthur's annals quest,
The tales will well their time reward !
Of her who sat by Beau de Main
It will be my duty here to tell:
Of all the maids 'neath Arthur's reign
She did in comeliness excell,
Her eyes were like the living light
Of meteors born of blue,
And from each orb, so starry bright,
A generous soul looked through
Her face like garden of the East
When summer blooms in all her prime,
Roses red and white the showers feast,
Do all commingling bloom sublime.
A nobler head and fairer brow
Was never seen with mortal maid,
Nor through all the ages until now
Were such wavy, golden locks surveyed;
As opening rose her mouth was sweet,
Never yet did rubier lip

The searching eye of nature greet,
Nor from a mortal goblet sip.
White as the foam the billows show,
Heaved 'neath gauzy silk her bosom fair.
As golden sunshine cast on snow
O'er neck and shoulders stream'd her hair;
Her white round arms were like the down
That waves upon the autumn field,
That with snowy loveliness doth crown
The dark brown hulls that did it yield.
A form more perfect and more fair,
By nature crowned with nobler grace,
Ne'er trod the earth, nor breathed its air,
Nor did those of mortal mold embrace.
A foot more light, yet firm than hers,
Upon this world has never trod;
Not lighter summer's zephyr stirs
That bows no grass along the sod,
Her tread was like the fleecy snow
That touches on the river's face,
But ruffles not its tranquil flow,
Nor leaves behind the slightest trace;
Her voice was soft as wind that sighs
At summer through the sultry vale,
Sweet as perfumes that on it rise—
From violets, rose and lilies pale!

VI.

No wonder that the maid was fair,
And famed for beauty o'er the earth,
For from a bright immortal pair
'Twas said that maiden drew her birth.

A pair of angels, so the story runs,
Left their heavenly homes of yore,
To journey space and view the suns,
And countless planets to explore;
From world to world, from star to star,
The adventurous angels flew,
And where the comets blazed afar
All grand, but terrible to view;
And while amidst the realms of space,
Where worlds on worlds unnumbered glow'd
And over all creation's face
Their blazing lights eternal flowed.
Amidst the boundless realms afar,
A world they saw in glowing azure drest
That seem'd to them a gleaming star,
More beautiful than all the rest;
And down they shot on lightning wings
Beyond the utmost speed of thought,
Past planets form'd in glowing rings,
All with immortal beauty fraught;
And lighted here upon this sphere,
The lovely home of mortal man;
Enraptured stare the angel pair,
No world they'd seen of grander plan;
And here on earth their home they made,
Though all unseen of mortal men,
Save at noons when forests spread their shade,
And sunshine warm'd the hill and glen.
All those who saw the lovely pair,
Of them did wonderous marvels tell,
One was a maiden heavenly fair,
Her waving, golden tresses fell

O'er shoulders fair as froth on seas,
Face with all charms in rainbows seen;
Her airy step was like the breeze
That stirs not e'en the aspen green.
The other was a comely youth,
Of godlike, all commanding mien,
Whose visage seem'd the shrine of truth,
With every virtue glittering sheen;
The Genii he was styled by men
Of all the mountains and the hills,
And she the Nymph of sunny glen,
And all the fountains and the rills;
One sole offspring, but of form divine,
Sprung from the union of this pair,
In her did all their virtues shine,
And all beauties of her mother fair:
They kept her in their secret glen
Throughout many an age of time.
And taught her all that mortals ken,
And all of angel lore sublime;
Then sent her forth as mortal maid,
To charm and gladden human kind;
In every glorious cause to aid,
And lead the race on paths refined.
Clotilda was this maiden named,
In Orkney she'd been born and bred,
And much through her those isles were famed,
Back in the misty ages fled.
The glories of King Arthur's court,
Had reached her in her secret glen,
And unto Camelot did she resort
To see this first of mortal men.

In quest of gallant knight came she,
Who could achieve adventures bold,
And for her pining captives free,
Grim giants kept in rocky hold.
But none like Beau de Main she found
In perilous deeds and knightly worth;
All knights renowned of the Table Round
He far out shone, and all on earth;
So he she singled for perils grim,
And dread, awe inspiring deed;
What recked he loss of life and limb,
Her faith and love his glorious meed;
If was death his lot, he lost her not,
His spirit would move at her side,
If he lived, then at high Camelot
Her King Arthur would give as bride.

VII.

Done is the feast, the mirth has ceased,
In King Arthur's glittering halls;
Where spear and sword and targes broad
Hang vast along the mighty walls,
Where axes bright and mace of might
The gazing coward's soul appalls;
And high o'er head the banner red,
O'er helms and gleaming armor falls,
In awful rows they there repose,
For not a sound to battle calls.
But loud the lay of love and fray
The skillful bards of Arthur sing;
Deep, full and strong, flows forth the song,
While chords of harps responding ring.

Of gallant knight and lady bright,
 Of loves and hates and wars of old,
 Of daring king in tourney ring,
 Waving plume and helm of gold;
 Of hydras dread with dragon's head,
 By arm of mortal heroes slain;
 Of slighted oath and broken troth,
 And dying friendship's throes and pain;
 Hunts o'er brake, and moor for stag and boar,
 And glories of the chase they sing,
 And varied swell and songs as well
 From bards and harps alternate ring.

VIII.

The festive day is waning fast,
 Yet shines the sun in Arthur's halls,
 Though eastward of those towers vast
 Apace a lengthening shadow falls;
 Yet, 'ere he goes his beams are east
 In living splendor on those walls,
 On shield and lance the sunbeams glance,
 And all like waving flame they blaze;
 On greaves of steel the sunbeams reel,
 And flash around their blinding rays.
 On shield and lance the sunbeams glance,
 On Morion, sword and helmet sheen,
 On armor bright those beams alight,
 And all resplendent glows the scene;
 So long they glar'd on polished steel,
 And so intense the sheen became,
 It seems those halls within reveal
 One waving flood of dazzling flame;

Then at the sight as if inspired
With brightness that around them fell,
Each bard and minstrel's soul seems fired
With something more than mortal spell.
And loud and louder still their song,
And strains of music roar and ring,
'Till like a storm it sweeps along
Through all the castles of the king;
And swiftly turns where splendor burns
The eyes of every chief and knight,
Soul and mind all thought and feeling spurns,
Save steel gleaming to the sunbeams bright.

IX.

While gleam'd the shine of the day's decline,
In princely Arthur's royal halls,
And stirring chime of minstrel's rhyme
Reechoed loud within the walls;
Strode in the hall an aged man,
With locks as white as Denmark's snow,
Who bowed to the king and then began
To speak in accents soft and low;
King Arthur, o'er many a mile
Of earth my weary feet have trod,
O'er mountain high and deep defile,
O'er deserts drear and vernal sod,
To many a kingly court I've been,
And noble kings were they, I trow,
But never place like this I've seen,
Through all my journeys until now.
The knights renown'd of the Table Round
Are known throughout the spacious earth,

Their praise doth sound where men are found
Who honor give to fame and worth;
And hither here I've sped to see
If any hero I can find,
Whose soul's of every baseness free,
And has an unpolluted mind,
For such alone can draw this sword,
From out its diamond studded sheath,
And he who doth, shall be its lord,
Nor any peril fear yon sky beneath;
With that he placed in Arthur's hand
A long, massive glittering sword,
Than Excalibur, far more grand,
More terrible and long and broad.

X.

Long, long essayed the gallant king,
To draw from out its sheath that magic blade,
But it from sheath he could not bring,
Though he with all his might essayed;
Then all dismayed his chiefs surveyed
The ponderous, glittering brand
They knew 'twas vain for them to try
When failed had Arthur's stalwart hand.
They all essayed to draw that blade
They all essayed but Beau de Main,
In his hand was laid the starry blade
Nor was that hero's effort vain;
Forth at his touch the weapon came,
Loud rattling from its starry sheath,
The glittering falchion flashed like flame
From burning cloud on midnight heath;

Then high up on the Table Round
He the glittering falchion threw,
There it fell, with thundering sound,
While gems of lightning from it flew,
Abashed with surprise the heroes all
The wonderous deed behold,
And louder through King Arthur's hall
The swelling strains of music rolled.

XI.

Come, come with me, the old man spake,
And thou shalt rise to honors new;
Thou shalt yokes of banded tyrants break,
And glory's brightest path pursue.
Thou art the lord of magic sword,
And thou with it shall prowess do;
On battle field, 'twill cleave each shield,
And smite all mortal armor through.
Beneath its sheen and edges keen,
Those who never fled before shall fly;
And monsters grim in form and limb
That vex and curse the world shall die
So mount thy steed and with me speed
For ere yon sun our sight shall leave,
Thou shalt range through a castle strange,
And deeds of prowess high achieve.

XII.

Forth on their steeds the twain have gone,
From King Arthur's ancient halls,
Where yet the glowing sunbeams shone,
On glittering steel clad walls.
O'er moor and brake, by stream and lake,
The wild boar's reedy fen,

By hill and crag where roams the stag,
And wilds scarce known to men;
Ride on those twain, until they gain
A valley lone and drear,
Abrupt and grand on either hand,
The towering hills appear;
Each steep incline with fir and pine,
And oak and gum is crowned,
And o'er them twine huge folds of vine,
That trail along the ground,
Though here and there the hills are bare,
No trees bedeck their side,
Yet there green moss with glowing gloss
Waves in its vernal pride.
O'er boulders steep huge torrents leap
Into the vale below,
O'er boulders brown those floods rush down,
With foam as white as snow.
In roaring mass they onward pass,
To a river deep and broad,
Those waters strong flow fierce along,
Too wild for steed to ford.
And midst its flow huge boulders show
At times their naked heads,
Some red as blood, some white as flood,
When froth its surface spreads.
And some are dark as is the bark
When charred by scorching flame,
Some somber brown that sternly frown,
O'er floods they can not tame;
That by them toil in fierce turmoil,
And o'er them dash their spray,

As if their pride all rocks defied,
That dared to bar their way;
And long that vale the lilies pale
Waved o'er those waters wide;
And roses set by violet
Bedeck the river's side;
And grasses green as ever seen
Wave o'er the teeming soil;
And incommode the narrow road
'Long which those horsemen toil,
And years have past, a number vast,
Since there has horseman trod;
All men feared well that haunted dell,
And shunn'd its fatal sod,
In rhymes of old strange tales are told
About that valley drear,
Of monsters dread that there are bred,
And fiends for men to fear;
Of dragons grim in form and limb,
That fly on wings of flame;
All O'er whose hide strange scales abide,
Hard as yet sword became;
And ne'er could feel the edge of steel,
All o'er its horrid frame;
And vain the force of man and horse
Its grisly rage to tame.
Ne'er mortal trod that fatal sod
By either night nor day,
But to its jaw and horrid maw
They instant found their way.

XIII.

But little reck'd our hero bold
For idle tales that minstrels told

'Bout either glen or hill or wold,
Of caverns dread or giants bold,
His spirit knew no more of fear
Than rock 'round which the surges tear;
His soul was set on perils grim,
And these alone delighted him;
With hand on rein and rowels red,
He followed where that old man led,
Little he knew and less he cared,
What perils should that day be dared;
His arm was strong, his sword was keen,
He longed to dye its glowing sheen
With blood of paynim tyrants grim,
Or giants of stupendous limb;
Such as by bards were said to dwell
Within that valley lone and fell.

XIV.

Onward he goes, at length he sees
Amidst a grove of giant trees,
Whose mighty limbs though spreading wide
With flame are darken'd, scorched and dried,
And 'midst them at the mountain's base,
A horrid cavern he could trace,
Where grisly dragons flame disgorge
Dread as yet stream'd from blazing forge;
There noxious flames terrific float,
Grim, pestilence and death denote;
Sulphurous fumes midst flame and smoke,
And chlorine, lungs and nostrils choke,
Yet in that cave of stifling breath,
Was silence dread as that of death;
Though from it flowed a mighty flood,
Of reeking liquid red as blood.

XV.

Then spoke the man of hoary head:
Through yonder cavern we must tread,
But thou the dangerous way must lead,
So ready make for daring deed:
Thy sword unsheath, onward spur thy steed
And I'll thy thirst for glory feed.
Roused at the voice, from out the cave
A fearful leap the dragon gave,
Forward it roaring comes amain,
Like mountain torrent swelled with rain;
Black broods the air above its head,
And serpents spring beneath its tread;
Its horrid jaws are opened wide,
Nor belching flames its fangs could hide;
Those were in awful rows revealed,
Though half in reeking gore concealed,
Which from its jaws dropped down like rain;
And from its neck a shaggy mane,
Black as was ever darkness found,
Hung down and trailed along the ground.
Broad was its head and vast its length,
And all stupendous seemed its strength;
And over all its sable hide
Were folds on folds of horny pride,
That sharpest steel of man defied
To pierce, or harm to it betide;
Two mighty wings it shook in air,
Stirred it as though a storm were there.
To gaze upon its mighty size,
Its lion's head and horrid eyes,
It seemed all vain for man to hope
In fray 'gainst such a beast to cope;

Too vast its force, too huge its length,
For mortal's steel or hero's strength.

XVI.

But thought not thus the gallant knight,
He longed to meet that beast in fight;
He eyed it with a stern delight,
But ere he drew his falchion bright
To heaven a secret prayer he made,
Invoked his Lord Jehovah's aid;
Prayed as all knights and heroes true
Are wont, when glory they pursue.
Great God of every sea and clime,
Who sits 'midst seraph hosts sublime,
Thine the earth and sun and starry zone,
That journey round Thy endless throne,
Thine is the fount of life and light,
As well as death's all whelming might;
Thou gracious Judge of right and wrong,
Who can make the hero weak or strong.
Thy gracious ear to me incline,
And hear my thoughts for they are Thine.
Almighty and eternal Lord,
This day, with victory, crown my sword!
Strengthen my arm, make good my breath,
That I may stretch yon beast in death;
Let earth drink up its vital gore,
So it may curse mankind no more,
Let it beneath Thy servant fall,
So may it be, Thou Lord of all!

XVII.

Then swift, soon as the prayer he breathed,
He his glittering sword unsheathed,

And springing from his gallant horse
On foot he tries the dragon's force.
High o'er his head on ponderous wings
In air the horrid monster springs;
And as it strove with grisly claw
The gallant knight from earth to draw,
With one fell blow his sword he brings
On one of its tremendous wings,
Clean severed from its trunk it flew,
And prone on earth the monster threw.
From mouth that stream'd forth gore and flame
A dread, infernal roaring came;
On earth the wing descending fell,
With shock that shook the lonely dell,
While gore gushed from the monster's side,
And shooting far the forests dyed
Where o'er the trees on every limb
Hung hissing folds of serpents grim.

XVIII.

Again the beast his head uprears,
For victory or death prepares;
Dread as the thunder cloud he came,
His throat a roaring fount of flame,
Swift as the lightning bolt it sped
A claw above the hero's head;
Another swoop of his trusty blade,
And on the earth that claw is laid;
Swift down it falls 'midst streaming gore,
To injure mortal man no more.
Then fiercer wax'd the monster's ire,
And dreader gushed the founts of fire;
Before those flames of sulphur dire
From conflict did the knight retire.

But through the path he sped, anon
The roaring terror thundered on,
Forward it sped where e'er he came,
O'er him casting forky, waving flame;
Yet sped the knight where purer air
Did soon his wasted strength repair;
Then high he reared his seven-fold shield,
Which shelter from the flame did yield;
And while on this he caught the flame,
Full on the roaring beast he came,
Between its eyes his reeking sword
Made horrid passage deep and broad;
Prone on the earth the terror came,
And ceased the roaring fount of flame,
Though fast and dread its serpent tail
Moved round the hero like a flail !

XIX.

Backward a space the hero drew,
Where he could well the monster view,
Then back he sped with vigor rife,
To end the grisly Terror's life;
One full sweep with his trusty blade,
And the snaky tail on earth is laid;
Three times his sword he drives in gore,
And with a hoarse and horrid roar,
Shaking the earth on which it lies,
The roaring Terror writhing dies.
While rivers huge of reeking gore
Adown the winding valley pour.
The horrid serpents vast and grim,
That hang from every tree and limb,
All palsied drop with stiffened fang,
And breathe on earth their dying pang.

Soon as the grisly Terror dies,
And lifeless all it smoking lies,
From gore the hero wipes his sword,
Gives thanks to Heaven's eternal Lord.

XX.

Up through that cavern dark and drear,
Where that grim Terror made its lair,
Upon their strong and mettled steeds,
That hero with his guide proceeds;
Through subterranean passage drear,
They go and mock at night and fear.
The way was rough and dark and dread
For either steed or man to tread;
Yet safely on their way they made
Till daylight on the darkness played;
And here a gate did they survey,
That blocked the passage of that way,
Huge bars of steel and beams of brass,
A gate, a strong and ponderous mass,
That gleamed all o'er like molten glass,
Completely blocked that gloomy pass.
Down from his steed the hero springs,
And 'gainst the gate his force he flings,
But vain 'gainst it his strength he brings,
It neither stirs nor shakes nor rings;
Solid as rock or mountain's side,
It stood and all his force defied;
Nor least bewildered and amazed,
Upon that gate the hero gazed;
But strove and strove with all his force,
To move that gate and clear his course.

XXI.

Then spake the man with hoary head:
The path we came again no man shall tread.
Behold, it all is closed with rock,
That ne'er shall move to earthquake's shock,
To flame, nor storm, nor hand of time,
Till nature's death-knell God shall chime.
Before us life and glory glow,
Behind are only death and woe,
To linger midst this stifling breath
Would shortly bring us ghastly death;
So then, most valiant knight and good,
Well proved in deeds of hardihood,
Once more 'gainst it thy valor try,
And clear the way or here we die;
Perhaps in this thy gleaming sword
May unto thee some aid afford."

XXII.

Behind the hero cast his eye,
And nought but rock could he desery;
The path that they had journeyed through
No longer met his searching view;
But rocks as hard as e'er were drilled
In solid mass that passage filled,
Nor left the faintest trace behind,
Where'd been that pass for him to find.
A moment, and but a moment's space,
He gazed on the enchanted place,
Then from his sheath his blade he drew,
While sparks of lightning from it flew,
Which far and wide spread flashing round,
And filled the place with light and sound.

Then swift on that barrier grim
It sped with all his force of limb,
The ponderous gate terrific rings,
And from its place like lightning springs,
And instant fades from mortal sight,
Like on the cloud the flash of light.
Then spoke a voice, a voice sublime,
That seemed to sound all o'er that clime:
Dreadful hour and fatal day,
All our power has past away;
All, all our spells and magic grand,
Are wrecked for aye by mortal hand,
Past away, as foretold of yore,
By Merlin's voice and Merlin's lore;
Dreadful day and fatal hour,
That ends on earth the wizard's power.

XXIII.

Ceased the voice, but ere died its sound
Like rolling waves the earth stirred round,
'Till rocks from out their places rose,
And writhed with all terrific throes;
The lofty hills were rent in twain
A moment's space, then joined again,
While over all a sable cloud
Closed grim and dread with thunders loud,
Though not a lightning flash nor flame
From out that shroud of thunder came;
Dread and more dread the thunder rolled,
And darker grew that awful fold,
Beneath those peals of thunder loud
To earth their heads the forests bowed,
As if there a roaring whirlwind trod,
Or dreder still, an angry God!

XXIV.

The thunder ceased and shrieks aghast,
Loud as the roar of mountain blast,
Burst from that cloud's terrific fold,
Then all at once from sight it rolled;
Where it had been nought else was seen
But azure sky and mountains green,
A flowery dell with lofty trees,
That waved their leaves 'midst balmy breeze;
Along which that old man hoar and strange
With Bean de Main begins to range.
Far 'up that dell those travellers wound,
O'er barren rock and grassy ground;
At length a lofty hill they spy,
Piled up against the western sky,
Where many a tower confronts the eye,
With wall and gate and bulwark high;
All formed of vast stupendous blocks,
And seem'd a pyramid of rocks,
Of dark and green and red and gray;
By Titans piled in vast array,
To rear their battlements and towers,
When warr'd they 'gainst the heavenly powers.
High on the hills they stood sublime,
Seemed out of reach of storm or time,
As there they gleamed in grand array,
Beneath the beams of closing day!
But to them, of path, no utter trace
Was seen upon that mountain's face,
Of road where e'er the eye pursue
On right or left was caught no clue;
Like some rock-guarded eagle's nest,
High hung upon the mountain's crest,

Beyond the reach of hunter's hand,
Those towers amidst the sunshine stand!

XXV.

O'er his eyes his hand the hero raised,
To shield them from the beam that blazed,
And at their splendor all amazed
Steadfastly on those bulwarks gazed,
For stronger, loftier tower
He'd ne'er seen before that hour;
It looked all like some mighty hold
Reared by the Cyclops Kings of old,
Yet all within and all around
Seem'd wrapt in silence so profound,
So void of life and stir and sound—
Those hills seem'd with a phantom crown'd.
But while he gazed the old man spake:
Come, thy way to yonder bulwark take!
No road I see, the knight replied,
O'er all yon mountain's lofty side,
Its whole broad surface I can view,
And road on it I see no clue;
And vain for me or you to try
The scaling of that mountain high;
Those rocks are all too smooth and steep
For man up them to climb or creep.

XXVI.

There is a road, the other spake,
Thyself for it now ready make,
Within thy hand thy falchion take,
Lift shield, and keep thine eye awake,
For I may lead on peril's path,
And thou must nobly brave their wrath;

And never glory yet was won
By any knight beneath yon sun,
Who did not bravely troubles meet,
And all unflinching dangers greet;
And put all perils to defeat,
Be they of body or of soul,
And onward press to glory's goal!
While thus he speaks they swiftly ride
Far down along the mountain's side,
To where the base with trees was crowned,
And then 'midst tangled bush they found
There opened a passage broad and wide,
Right through the hollow mountain's side;
In rode the twain, and soon anon
Saw a broad, steep way leading on,
To where those lofty towers rose,
In dream-like silence and dread repose.

XXVII.

They reached the bulwark's lofty wall,
Pass'd through an archway broad and tall,
Where stood a gate wide open cast,
Wrought out of bars of iron vast,
Braced with bands of ponderous brass,
And those of steel in mighty mass.
Scarce by the gate those twain were past
Than 'cross the archway it was cast,
Closed with a fierce and sudden sound,
That echoed all those bulwarks round;
And loud and plain was heard the jar
Of placing lock and bolt and bar.
The knight turn'd round with searching eye,
But not a thing could he descry

In likeness of the human race
About that archway's ample space;
The deed was done by hand unseen,
Perhaps not one of mortal mien.

XXVIII.

Then onward swift those horsemen ride
Into a court-yard long and wide,
Yet all the place of life seems free,
For not a beast nor man they see;
No sound of human voice they hear,
Nor any stir breaks on their ear,
Save their coursers' tread on stony ground,
They meet no other stir nor sound;
And these re-echo strange and drear
Through all those lofty bulwarks there.
Was it some dread, enchanted place
Unknown to those of mortal race,
Where never mortal trod before,
And whence he shall depart no more,
'Till time the judgment morn shall bring?
Or was it the tomb of some great king,
Who reign'd amidst the ages past,
Long since 'neath oblivion cast?
Who, though he rear'd a tomb as grand
As ever yet by monarch plann'd,
His fame and name he could not save
However cruel, good, or brave,
From wasting time and fleeting years,
That crumble all that mortal rears,
And all that nature can control?
While thus revolved the hero's soul,
From westward, from whence beam'd the sun

His setting rays o'er mountains dun,
He heard a deafening trumpet clang,
That echoing through those bulwarks rang;
Hills shook beneath that trumpet's blast,
As if through them an earthquake past,
And right between him and the light
The sunbeams cast upon that height.
A steel-clad champion he espied
Upon a coal-black charger ride,
With visor down and spear in rest,
Right onward unto him he press'd;
With clang of arms and courser's tread
The air was filled with tumult dread;
As if with riving thunders torn,
Not swifter yet a cloud was borne
Upon the pinions of the storm
Than sped that horse and steel-clad form;
And like a cloud that meets the sight,
Whose centre all is black as night,
Though round its edges lightnings play,
Gild it with terrible array,
For man and horse from head to heel
Are sheathed in plates of sable steel;
But gleaming helm and spear and sword,
And axe terrific, keen and broad,
That armed that rider cast a light
Like that round thunder-cloud at night.

XXIX.

Another glorious trumpet clang
Throughout those lofty ramparts rang;
And straight a line of glittering spears
Behind that rider grim appears;

Far down the hill they swift arise
Like flashing clouds that mount the skies,
And glowing helm and sword and shield
Are 'midst the rising ranks revealed;
And o'er the coming wave of steel
To and fro, golden banners reel.
Onward it came in swift career,
While dust made dark the stagnant air,
All that wide space grew dark and dun,
To silence sped the glowing sun,
As when the simoom fierce and red
Roars o'er the desert's sandy bed;
Yet nearer fast that wave of steel
Comes on with deafening trumpet peal,
That shakes the air with tumult dread,
While nearer sounds the measured tread
Of armed men, whose clanging sound
The stormy trumpet notes have drowned:
And nearer 'midst the dark'ning gloom
Is seen the coming helm and plume;
With broken gleams of ruddy light
Rise long arrays of lances bright;
The long arrays of shield and sword,
Of daggers keen and axes broad.

XXX.

Then from those lofty ramparts rose
Storms of unutterable woes,
Sighs, lamentations and loud moans,
Horrible outcries and hoarse groans;
All languages—tongues of every clime
Mix'd in that storm of anguish chime;
With hands together smote amain,

And feet that stamp with throes of pain,
Made up a tumult dread and fell
As ever roused the king of hell;
Made up a tumult grim and drear,
That whirled through all that darken'd air,
Like burning sand the simoom lifts,
And on that roaring whirlwind drifts.
With ear intent and eye awake,
As stands the lion in the brake,
With soul as void of mortal fear,
As oaks round which the tempests tear
All things strange, Beau de Main watched there
That met his eye or pierced his ear.

XXXI.

My gallant knight, thus spoke his guide,
Fear not the least yon ranks of pride,
Though they hem thee in on every side,
'Thou shalt as victor o'er them ride.
Go, cleave each gleaming helm and shield,
Yon host through thee to death shall yield;
First take this spear and spur thy steed,
'Gainst him who doth yon squadron lead;
Yon sable knight who comes so fierce,
Him through the breast and breast-plate pierce,
He said, then unto Beau de Main
A spear he gave of twisted grain.
All like a stately mast in length,
And like the mountain oak for strength,
Armed at the end with steel as strong
As e'er was forged, wrought sharp and long,
This swift the hero placed in rest,
Waiting for him who onward pressed.

As there he stood a sudden flame
Swift bursting from that darkness came,
High o'er the hemisphere it sailed,
And through the darkened air prevailed.

XXXII.

As some dark cloud of giant form,
That rides upon the roaring storm,
That shakes the world beneath its path,
Whose thunders mutter forth its wrath;
Whose lightnings fiercely round it play;
And guides it on its rapid way,
That meeting bursts with deafening shock,
Upon the side of some firm rock;
Then downward falls in sudden flight,
Before that rock and fades from sight:
So met that hero Beau de Main,
So sudden rolled upon the plain;
Through breast-plate and through breast that spear
Had torn a passage grim and drear,
With horrid din his armor rung,
As horse and man to earth were flung;
O'er broken steel his crimson blood
Fast steam'd to earth in ample flood;
By fallen steed he writhed with pain,
And never to arise again.
As to earth that champion came,
Died in the air that flash of flame;
Swift from the hemisphere it sailed,
And darkness grim again prevailed

XXXIII.

Then favored by the solid gloom,
That gathered as the dread simoom,

Like whirlwind on that armed band
Rode Arthur's knight with flaming brand;
As through a grove of saplings strong
The horrid cyclone sweeps along,
Uproots and tears them from the ground,
And strews them all in ruin round;
Wide is its path and grim and dread
The devastation 'neath it spread;
When past the groves, it stays its course,
Then back returns with tenfold force;
Another path of ruin dread
Behind its roaring flight is spread;
So through that grove of lances bright,
Rode to and fro King Arthur's knight;
And all before him, right and left,
Went down with heads and helmets cleft,
Slaughtered and dying strew the ground
While armor clangs with horrid sound
And thunders through those ramparts tall,
Like waters o'er some mighty fall—
And echo over hill and glen.

XXXIV.

Not tamely died those armed men:
They closed upon King Arthur's knight,
With sword and spear and axes bright;
Three times they closed in fierce array,
And three times stopped his gory way,
While on his shield with horrid clang
Their spears and swords and axes rang.
With fearful din they closed on him,
Like roarings of the lions grim
Upon the night o'er shadowed wild,
With reeking slaughter round them piled;

And hunger drives them on amain,
To make themselves tombs of the slain.
They closed like angry billows' shock,
At midnight on a solid rock,
Whose lofty head with giant pines
Towering o'er the deep inclines;
Who while the floods are rocked below,
The roaring storms that o'er them blow;
In thousand shapes their branches throw,
And from them make fell tumult flow;
The branches clash, the waters roar,
On tempests mingled tumults pour,
And waked by nature's fierce unrest
The eagles leave their lofty nest;
And mounting on the tempest's car,
High o'er the elemental jar,
They flap their wings, then whirl around,
Send far their screams on night profound;
So on that knight those men closed in,
With trumpet's clang and armor's din.

XXXV.

But while amidst that darkness dread
Their blows at Arthur's knight they sped,
Full many a warrior's buckler broad
Was rent by his own comrade's sword;
Full many a brawny bosom there
Was pierced by its own comrade's spear;
By scores they fell amongst the slain,
By their own men, not Beau de Main;
Yet fought that hero fierce and grim,
'Till not one living stood round him.
Died out the trumpet's stirring peal,
And ceased the horrid clang of steel;

Then through the darkness burst a flame,
That gleaming o'er the ramparts came,
And ceased of pain, the horrid din
That roar'd like storms those walls within;
The setting sun his glory threw,
Around and all that gloom withdrew;
There round the hero lay his foes,
All stark and still in dread repose;
There broken armor strew'd the ground,
Heads cleft or pierced with wounds profound:
They lay in reeking crimson drown'd.
None save that hero and his guide
Were living 'midst that wreck espied.
Where that huge steed and rider lay
Those twain there bent their eager way;
His towering plume of sable hue
From off his glittering helm they drew;
Then doff his helm and visor all,
Full on his face the sunbeams fall.
Darker than night his shaggy beard,
Matted o'er visage stern appeared;
A savage frown those features wore,
As always in their life they bore;
And glared his eyes in death unclosed,
As fierce as when he foe opposed;
Dark as the shades of night were they,
And gleam'd in death with piercing ray;
O'er them his brows descending flowed,
Black as e'er raven's plumage glowed;
Like eagle's bill his massive nose
Descending o'er his mouth arose;
But this was hid from human eye,
With heavy beard of sable dye;

A fiercer countenance on man
Than his, ne'er yet did nature scan.
Taking his face and bearing all,
His mighty statue broad and tall,
Ponderous limbs of massive length,
That all bespoke a monster's strength;
He seem'd more like a Titan grim
Than one of mortal form and limb.

XXXVI.

But he was one of mortal mould,
A giant cruel, strong and bold,
As in history we are told
Were often seen in days of old,
And wrought to mortal's dole and wrong.
His were those bulwarks tall and strong,
Whose walls of rock so broad and high,
Might wear of storm and time defy;
Whose bristling parapets and towers
Scoffing frown'd at human powers.
Right often did King Arthur's ear
Strange stories of these ramparts hear;
They told him of its mighty lord,
His savage statue tall and broad,
In size surpassing those of earth,
And who from monsters drew his birth;
Who lived on flesh of mortal men,
And drank their blood; who in his den
Unnumbered captives held in thrall.
Good knights and gentle ladies all.
But never could King Arthur's eye
The passage to those walls descry—
By day and night the path he sought,
But ne'er a clue to it he caught;

Or unto it had sped that king,
With all the knights that he could bring.
And he had raised that bulwark's wall,
Those captives straight had set from thrall,
Or he had with them found his fall
Beneath that grisly giant tall;
But of road or path no single clue
To reach those walls could Arthur view,
So safe from hand of mortal foe
They proudly scoffed at all below,
And safe within its lofty hold
Dwelt its tyrant owner fierce and bold,
Surrounded by a mighty throng
Of followers, haughty, huge and strong,
Who through the force of Beau de Main
Were numbered 'mongst the gory slain.
And for allies the giant sought
All who in necromancy wrought;
All conjurers of magic spell
Who wrought on earth the lore of hell;
Who could enchantments cast around,
And men with wizard's charms confound;
All those who could those arts unfold
Found favor in that lofty hold;
Through them he hidden kept the road
From men that led to his abode.
But ways there were and more than three
That gave egress and ingress free,
By which could pass both steeds and men,
From there unto the distant glen,
Easier far and safer more
Than that De Main had travelled o'er.

And when a destined deed he'll do,
He'll break the subtle secrets through,
To every road he'll find the clue
And easily each road pursue.

XXXVII.

In glowing chambers of the West
The sun's in all his glory drest,
Basking beneath his tingeing smile
Float round unnumbered clouds the while,
O'er his bright disk their forms they throw,
And 'neath him all resplendent glow.
All o'er the sky the clouds are rolled
With hues of amber and of gold,
With forms apart by sunbeams torn,
They all the western skies adorn.
But in the East a mighty cloud
Doth all the sky with sable shroud;
From earth unto the zenith's bound,
It spread its robe of gloom profound;
But bright on the darkness that it reared
A vision of glory there appeared;
It came like a spirit on the cloud,
Whose beauty could no darkness shroud;
It spread in a glorious arch,
From horizon to zenith did march.
Then sublime in its grandeur it stood,
O'er hanging the mountains and wood,
The valleys, the torrents, and flood,
Tingeing their flow with the hues of blood;
Sped the rays of the sun from the land,
Yet, that iris the heavens still spann'd;
Near the earth it ends darkened anon,
While in the zenith it still beam'd on,

Smiled on earth like an angel of light,
'Till the sunbeams departed from sight.
Then away like a phantom it fled,
And dense darkness after it sped.
Night o'er the mountains her banner unfurl'd,
And solid gloom settled over the world.

PART II.

I.

At midnight round that lofty wall,
Wherein was utter silence all,
That hero and his trusty guide
All noiseless as two spectres ride;
A solid darkness grim and drear
Lay o'er the sky and everywhere,
While silence horrid and profound
Reigned over all the hills around;
No breath of air the darkness stirred,
Nor rustling of a leaf was heard;
No night-hawk's scream, no shriek of owl,
No stir of bats, nor watch-dogs' howl,
Though many in those walls were bred,
Stirr'd once with sound that darkness dread.
All was as silent and as dark
As is the dead oak's withered bark,
That lies at night on desert sand,
Charred by the lightning's blasting brand;
All was as silent as the tomb,
And spread around as dense a gloom,

Around all nature seem'd to rest,
 As if with some grim awe oppressed;
 In stillness horrible she stood,
 Like mourner wrapped in sable hood,
 Whom grief has freed of vital breath,
 And placed upon the lap of death.
 But the dreadest silence ever born
 Shall with stirring sound of man be torn,
 And he shall break through every spell
 By witches brought to earth from hell;
 He shall crush their power and might,
 Through him from earth they'll wing their flight,
 And he shall turn their realms of night
 To regions, joyous, grand and bright.
 His dauntless soul and stalwart arm
 Shall burst the wizard's fatal charm;
 The fell neeromancer's power
 Through man shall find its dying hour;
 He all spells, arts and charms shall quell,
 And victor stand o'er those and hell.
 Foremost of all in nature's clime,
 And all the universe sublime,
 Where being is, shall man be found,
 And be its king forever crown'd;
 And subject be to only Him
 Who fashioned body, soul and limb,
 Created after His own plan,
 Breathed in him life, and called him man.

II.

Apace the night was speeding on,
 Yet did black darkness all things don;
 Meanwhile that hero and his guide
 A gateway in the walls espied;

But it was close and bolted fast,
With locks deep set in granite vast,
And formed of such stupendous bars
And beams of steel and brass, it mars
That stalwart hero's utmost strength,
To e'en shake its ponderous length;
But through its bars his gaze he cast,
And peered into those bulwarks vast,
And there he saw far, far away,
A flame of blue unearthly ray;
Within a grisly skull it burn'd,
Which round and round forever turn'd
As doth the windmill in the blast,
And horrid sparks around it cast.
'Twas just one thousand years that night
Since first was lit that hellish light,
Yet day and night that flame had burn'd,
And round and round the skull had turn'd,
Showering sparks in ceaseless flight.
Astonished gazed the wondering knight,
While ghastly figures round it drew,
And caught the sparks that from it flew;
Held them before their glaring eyes,
And watched them into serpents rise;
Which soon as they with being breathed,
They round their æmon bodies wreathed.
One saw he 'mongst those demons grim
Far more dread both in shape and limb
Than all the rest; this grisly form
Was black as cloud of thunder storm;
His massive breast and limbs of length
Showed him a monster huge in strength,

His horrid eyes gleam'd fierce with light,
But black as is the womb of night;
Bald was his head and o'er his face
Was seen of hair no single trace;
His horrid mouth a tusk revealed,
Huge as the boss on hero's shield;
And from each side with gleaming fang
Did two grim hissing serpents hang;
Huge was his nose, from nostrils broad
Eternal jets of steam he poured;
A crown wrought out of bones of men,
And whiter than the frost on fen,
High on his grisly head he wore,
And plainly this device it bore:
Who e'er o'ercomes this form in fight
Shall with its blood destroy the light
That in this skull forever burns,
And round and round forever turns;
When it is quenched the wizard's power
Shall instant fly this fatal tower;
Brave must he be and strong his arm,
Who dares to deal us dole and harm.
Scarce this the gazing knight had read
Than swift he sees that monster dread
Grasp in his hands a mighty spear,
Vast as an oak the mountains rear—
Weighty and knotty, thick and long,
Steel'd at the end both keen and strong;
Round it he coils a serpent vast,
That hisses flame horrid and 'ghast—
As lightnings from the clouds are cast,
When they ride at night on the blast;
Then high o'er his head he shakes the spear,
Whirls it round and around in air,

All as easy as some frail toy
In the hand of a stalwart boy.
Then round him danced unearthly forms,
And rose a wail like rising storms;
When on the night o'er shadow'd plain
The storm king comes with all his main;
And eagles scream and flap their wings,
High o'er the tumult that he brings.

III.

Swift towards the gate where stood the knight
Came on that form of demon might;
Close at his side a monster grim,
Of all unearthly shape and limb
Moved its ponderous length along,
Swift as an elephant and strong;
And like that beast its head it reared,
A trunk and two huge tusks appeared;
And o'er its back a scaly hide
Harder than steel the knight espied;
But where its neck and shoulders met
Was no defense 'gainst weapon set;
This saw the knight and marked the spot,
Nor in the fray that place forgot.
Ten legs from earth the monster bore,
Seven behind and three before;
And these were armed with mighty claws,
Like those round prey the lion draws;
And from it hung a snaky tail,
All covered o'er with horny scale;
Onward it came with lordly stride,
Its sable master close beside.

IV.

Open the gate the giant threw,
Against the solid wall it flew—
With dread recoil and jarring sound,
That fill'd with din the air around;
While its huge hinges grating roar'd,
And hoarse, harsh thunders round it pour'd.
And forth upon King Arthur's knight
Rushed out that form of demon might.
As on he came in swift career
On high he reared his knotted spear;
While high in air its gleaming point
Shone like a steeple's topmost joint;
Ere yet it took its downward flight
Upon that gallant steed and knight,
As bursts from cloud a flash of flame,
Full on the giant grim he came;
And through his bosom deep and broad
Up to the hilt he drove his sword;
And long before that giant's spear
Began to downward cleave the air,
His sword the good knight drew amain,
And pierced him through and through again.
Through heart and lungs the blade he drove,
And heart and lungs asunder clove;
Back on his monster huge and grim
The giant went with quivering limb;
Beneath his weight the monster fell
Crushed to the earth, and roar'd a yell
That shook the startled air around,
As if did hoarded thunders sound;
Then swifter than a flash of thought
On it his blade the good knight brought—

Right where the neck and shoulders grew,
And through that place his falchion flew—
That head to earth 'midst warm blood sunk,
And dying writhed the headless trunk.
Dropped from the giant's knotted spear,
The grisly serpent he'd coiled there—
Writhing it lay with broken fang,
And heaved on earth its dying pang.
Then in a vessel deep and wide,
That lay that lofty gate beside,
The knight caught up that giant's gore,
Fill'd it so it would hold no more;
And towards that all infernal light,
That glared within that skull so bright,
He onward spurr'd his snorting horse,
Swift as storm sweeps o'er its course,
And as storm in vigor and force
That sweeps over seas of the Norse!

V.

As that strange light the hero near'd,
Round it unearthly forms appear'd;
Loud neighed the steed and prick'd his ears,
And seems at times o'erwhelm'd with fears
At what there round that light appears,
And sounds that from that flame he hears;
Trembles that steed through form and limb,
Before that flame so strange and grim,
And not till in his foamy flank
Right oft and deep the rowels sank
Would he approach that hellish light,
And near it bring King Arthur's knight.

VI.

Right o'er the flame the hero drew,
And on it fast the gore he threw;
But ere that flame to darkness grew
Gore round in hissing showers flew;
And rising clouds of smoke and steam,
Gives it a more infernal gleam.
Again on it the gore he threw,
And unto utter night it grew;
While hiss'd it like the seething steel
When first its heat the waters feel.
Then rocked those ramparts dread and strange
As if through them did whirlwinds range;
And all things round began to change
Their color, aspect, size and form,
Like clouds before the driving storm.
Shook lofty parapet and tower,
Like leaves in autumn's windy bower;
While all unsightly figures glide
Around the walls on every side;
Then instant vanish in the air
With horrid shriekings of despair;
Filling the solid gloom around
With tumult dismal and profound;
Shook it as if huge birds of prey
Forever through it winged their way;
And flapped their pinions with a sound
That made the air like waves rebound,
When wild the ocean's surges roar,
Waging fray at night on rocky shore;
Or like huge sails on stately mast,
That flap amidst the midnight blast,
While waves toss 'neath the storm's control
And overhead the thunders roll.

VII.

Dead silence came a little space,
And rested over nature's face,
And from the battlements and walls
The solid gloom that instant falls;
Springs up a breeze that fans the air,
And all the gloom doth disappear—
Unnumbered stars in heaven shine,
And cast below their light divine;
And all around the ramparts rise
Distinctly to the hero's eyes.
Bright in the East o'er mountains green
The half-fill'd, ascending moon is seen;
Enormous clouds around her sail,
And make at times her lustre pale;
But their edges craggy, dark and torn,
She doth with glowing light adorn;
Gives all a glory not their own,
That circle round her beaming throne,
And on the dewy forests green
She pours her all bewitching sheen;
And where, amidst the far-off trees,
At times moves forth the gentle breeze,
Where leaves are waving to and fro,
The pearly dew-drops that they show,
Glitter beneath her glowing beam,
And molten, flowing silver seem.
And barren rocks o'er mountains thrown,
That never moss nor tree have grown;
Nor sign of vintage yet have known,
She decks with glory not their own;
Huge rocks of iron and of lime,
Impervious to storm or time;

Beneath her all enlivening glow,
The lustre of the diamond show;
And over all that lofty wall,
High parapet and tower tall,
Her glowing beams in glory fall,
And fill with light those ramparts all.
O'er spread with sheen and peace sublime,
All rested there throughout that clime.

VIII.

Towards a casement broad and tall,
Placed in that bulwark's granite wall,
Where suddenly a taper burns,
His scanning eyes that hero turns;
And there beheld a weeping throng
Of youths and maidens fair and strong.
Between their tears and wails of woe,
That all throughout those bulwarks flow,
And make them with their anguish ring,
A sorrow-laden song they sing.
The language of those strains they sung
Seem'd ever of the Hebrew tongue;
But one that on the hero's ear
Fell aye most dismal and most drear,
With sorrow freighted wild and grim,
His guide thus rendered unto him:

IX.

Shall our anguish never end?
Must we 'neath it forever bend?
Have we no Saviour, God or friend,
Who'll pity take and succor send?
Must our poor frames forever feel
The tyrant's chains and burning steel?

His scourging lash and crushing wheel,
Whose pains make soul and senses reel?
That leaves the body numbed with pain
'Till scarce the blood crawls through the vein;
Then tighter draws the clanking chain,
'Till we for gold shall ransom gain?
Oh, who will our succor be?
Oh, who will us from tortures free?
Who'll bring the hoard and pay the fee?
God of heaven, we look to Thee!
Thou God of Jacob, who of old
The gushing floods from Horeb rolled,
Who waters of the sea controll'd,
And through them led Thy chosen fold;
Who amidst thunder, smoke and flame
On Sinai's mount to Moses came,
Who with fire and sword Thy name
Did unto Israel's foes proclaim!
God of Abraham, who of old
The glories of his race foretold!
With pity here our pains behold,
For we belong unto that fold!
Bid this long night of bondage break,
And bid the morn of freedom wake;
O God! upon us mercy take,
If but for only Isaac's sake!

X.

Ceased the sad song and sadder strain,
But in the ear of Beau de Main
It rung as deep and wild and strong
As when their voices woke the song.
E'en when long years had past, his ear
Seem'd still that mournful song to hear;

Go where he would, its echoes still
Seem'd ever on his ears to thrill.
But while they sang that mournful lay
The beams of morning, hoar and gray,
Along the eastern skies began
With light the universe to span;
And soon Aurora's rosy car
Had paled the moon and dimmed east star;
Cast over hill and dale below
The sun's warm light and cheering glow;
Beneath his sheen the forests wide,
O'er hill and dale and mountain's side,
Put on that dark green, waving glow,
They only 'neath his lustre show;
While high o'er them on flapping wing
Did birds their morning praises sing;
And distant stream and mountain flood
Donn'd hues of crimson, gold and blood;
And o'er the fall, the torrent's spray
Like diamond flashed beneath his ray;
While all the hills of clouds that rolled
Around his disk were turn'd to gold.

XI.

Bright on the parapets and towers
The sun displays his morning powers;
Through all that castle's ample halls
The flooding light of sunshine falls.
Those men themselves from saddles free,
And tie their chargers to a tree
That rear'd itself erect and tall,
As was that bulwark's lofty wall.
Then through a doorway tall and wide
Moved on that hero and his guide—

From room to room, from door to door,
They all that stately place explore.
And many things they there behold,
Like urns and vases wrought of gold;
Huge sceptres, crowns and diadems,
Set thick with flashing, starry gems;
Huge polished helms with gold inlaid,
Piled high they in those rooms surveyed;
And swords whose hilts with gems were crown'd
That blinding lightnings flashed around.
And there did piles of treasure gleam
More vast than e'er in thought or dream
A miser yet conceived, and more
Than ever formed a monarch's store.
But with contempt from all this hoard,
And gems that flashed their light abroad,
As sheen as ever lightning burn'd,
The glory-seeking hero turn'd:
Such prize as it his spirit spurn'd;
Immortal renown, deathless fame,
Was his soul's only thought and aim;
And that glory must by him be won,
Where only knightly deeds are done;
Brave hell and fiends and all their wrath,
But never swerve from virtue's path.

XII.

Down to the gloomy vaults below,
Whence throes of pain eternal flow—
Where groans, wails, lamentations, sighs,
In divers languages arise—
With curses ever and anon,
That hero and his guide move on.

From vault to vault, o'er stony floors,
Through iron gates and massive doors,
Whose hinges grated, creaked and roar'd,
Those twain the grisly place explored.
Gyves, shackles and rusty chains,
Bespattered thick with gory stains,
Are piled in windrows long and tall,
And hang upon the mouldy wall.
Yet, in the rings of some are seen
Bones crusted o'er with mildew green—
Showing that forms of human kind
Those grisly fetters once did bind;
And they not only in them died,
But into skeletons they dried;
There perished and consumed away,
'Till scarce of them a vestige lay.
In one set of fetters they espied
A youth who but lately must have died;
All naked was his wasting form,
And it did worms consuming swarm;
Its skin from end to end was flaw'd,
Where vermin, rats and mice had gnaw'd;
O'er it green mould was growing fast,
And stifling fumes from it was cast.
And other sets securely span
Skeletons of woman or of man,
With flesh entirely destroyed,
Whose eyes displayed their horrid void;
Whose hollow ribs and grinning skull
Tell gazers there did tyrants cull
All vengeance, hate and ire grim,
They could from human form and limb.
Sickened with the fell scenes around,

As before he'd ne'er seen nor found,
With hasty steps he onward drew
To where that wail of anguish grew;
And soon within a vault he found
A throng of youths in fetters bound;
Whose bodies horrid scars reveal,
From burning oil and fusing steel;
With their toes, ears and fingers lopped,
And strown o'er floors where they had dropped,
With eyes that from grim sorrow glare,
Upon those twain they fix their stare;
Cease their wail of anguish deep,
And stop the scalding tears they weep;
With parted lips and glaring eyes
They view the twain with dumb surprise.

XIII.

Mute stood the knight a little space,
And in it view'd each captive's face;
On all their features woe and want
And famine stared forth grim and gaunt;
Such grisly wrecks in shapes of men
Had ne'er been seen by him 'till then;
Naked stood each poor captive's form,
As leafless trees in winter's storm;
And even all their hair and beard
The captor's rage and hate had shared;
All this unto the roots was singed,
And dark with flame the skin was tinged,
While scars were seen from head to heel,
From scalding oil and burning steel;
Some deep unto the bones were burn'd.

Awed at the sight, the hero turn'd
In haste his sicken'd gaze away,
Where casement broad let in the light of day.
Through it far off the walls he spied
Of stately towers, tall and wide,
And on their walls were casements seen
Whence curtains stream of gold and green,
Of yellow, crimson, red and blue,
And every varied shade and hue
That art or nature yet could show,
Or both of these shall ever know;
Amidst the flooding sunshine's glow,
On winds that wave them to and fro;
Rich fabrics they as e'er were wrought,
Or ever yet to kings were brought,
From Carthage, Tyre or Sidon's looms.
O'er them each flower in nature blooms,
Each flower its native hue assumes,
Just as nature it with beauty plumes.
Upon the all-enchanting scene
Long gazed the knight with vision keen;
Long looked the knight, for twice he saw
Forms of surpassing beauty draw
Unto those casements broad and high;
Gaze each with sorrow streaming eye,
And saw their scalding teardrops fall
Like rain flow down the lofty wall,
Which neither wind nor sunshine dried.
While there he gazed his hoary guide
Each captive of his fetters freed—
Did all from out that dungeon lead,
Into a court-yard long and broad,
Through which clear streams of water pour'd;

But as they reached the crystal wave,
Ere yet a hand those waters lave,
There side by side right on its brink
O'er worn with famine, those captives sink,
Breathing the saddest word that Fate
E'er gave to man—Too late! too late!
And hand in hand, and side by side:
Breathing this word, those captives died;
By famine wasted gaunt and grim,
With grisly scars o'er form and limb:
A horrid spectacle they made,
As side by side in death they laid.
O'er the ghastly scene a mournful view
The old man cast and swift withdrew;
Then with the hero swift he speeds
Where e'er the eye or fancy leads.

XIV.

Into that castle huge and grand,
Where weeping forms at windows stand,
With hasty step those twain speed on,
Where groans rise ever and anon—
Strike on the vaulted roof around,
And fill the air with dismal sound.
Yet onward swift the twain explore
Until they reach a lofty door,
Which marks of time and ruin wore,
And on it this inscription bore:

INSCRIPTION:

Mortal! be it woman, maid or man,
Fear the secrets of this hall to scan:
For whosoever enters here
Shall never leave these halls of fear;

Rash adventurer, read this o'er,
Then turn back and intrude no more !

XV.

That I'll ne'er do, the knight began,
While I can hilt of broadsword span;
While I am warm'd with blood of man,
I fear no secrets there to scan,
He said, and 'gainst the lofty door
His strength he threw; with harsh, loud roar
Of grating hinge it open flew,
And swift the twain within it drew;
While burst unearthly yells of scorn,
That fill'd their ears like blasts from horn.
Soon as they clear'd the doorway broad
A hand unseen, a flaming sword,
Struck on the door; with deafening sound
It fill'd the lofty walls around;
And closed again the door was sprung,
While hinges hoarse, harsh thunders rung;
Through wide wastes of bowers and halls,
Whose splendor on their vision falls—
With varied glory, such as streams
On banks of broken clouds, when gleams
The setting sun behind a storm,
And limns 'midst them the rainbow's form.
It seem'd all charms of earth and sky
Did there in mingling glory vie;
And all the wealth in nature known
Was there in rich confusion thrown.
There goblets bright with gold inlaid,
And tables all of silver made,
On which huge piles of coin were piled,
All round with burnished lustre smiled.

There golden vases, trays and urns
Are seen where e'er the vision turns;
With those of silver, whose lustre burns
Like flame and e'en that brightness spurns;
And all the place with splendor churns,
While high o'er head the eye discerns,
From lofty walls and ceilings hung,
Banners as gay as ever flung
Their folds upon the breeze's wings
When triumphal marched the eastern kings.
O'er casements wide were curtains thrown,
Of every tinge and color known;
Through which the sun his lustre threw,
And spread on all enchanted hue—
Of every sheen and varied shade
That ever art or nature made.
While did at every casement stand
Forms all like mortal maidens plann'd;
And fashioned all as fair and grand
As e'er the eye of mortal scann'd.
Some wore long, golden, wavy hair,
Which like the sunshine stream'd through air,
While some wore dark as is the shade
Of which the raven's plume is made;
And all as glossy and as sheen
As is that polished lustre seen
Upon the sable serpent's hide,
Where sunshine gilds his glossy pride.
And every form that there appears
Seems to be a Niobe of tears;
With heads lean'd o'er the casement's sill,
They fast eternal tears distill;
Like human tears they seem to fall,

And flow adown the castle wall;
But not from them a murmur flows,
Nor slightest sound of mortal throes—
Save tears all seem'd as void of woes,
As rock down which the water goes.
Upon a statue nobly plann'd
The hero placed his steel-clad hand—
Back from her face her tresses threw,
And on her features fixed his view,
And thus began in merry mood:

XVI.

In me did darkening horror brood,
And boil'd my blood through every limb
When first from yonder dungeon grim
These forms of weeping maids I saw;
I would have sworn I view'd them draw
Their faces from these casements high,
And then return with weeping eye;
I saw them move I would have sworn,
And vow'd they were of woman born—
I little deem'd, but here I'd seek,
And gentle maidens find and meek;
Not forms that neither breathe nor speak:
Wrought by the chisel of some Greek;
Who out of silent stone can form
A shape that seems with being warm;
That seems to bow and move and walk,
Its nostrils breathe, and lips to talk.
And I had also sworn when first
These forms upon my vision burst,
That I heard groans and sighs of pain
Ring on mine ears again, again!

Perhaps in them poor mortals dwell,
 Closed up in them by magic spell—
 Brought up to earth by fiends from hell,
 Which hero's arm and soul shall quell.
 But now this secret I will test:
 For when I came upon this quest,
 I secret swore within my breast
 That I would neither pause nor rest
 'Till every cursed wizard's charm
 I did of all its force disarm;
 And set each pining captive free
 That might within this castle be.
 And this I'll do while my good breath
 Keeps me from numbers grim, of death.
 As this he said, an axe he caught
 Within his hand, and down he brought
 The polished weapon, huge and dread,
 With force immense upon the statue's head.
 On the floor that blow the statue threw,
 Which in a thousand fragments flew;
 While all that axe of ponderous mass
 To atoms sped like shattered glass;
 And all the air around was torn
 With loud, unearthly yells of scorn,
 And scream'd a voice from out a vault:
 Stay here thy course, rash mortal, halt!

XVII.

That I'll not do, the knight replied,
 With voice that roar'd as far and wide,
 And shook the startled air around
 With just as much of life and sound!
 That I'll not do, for when I sped
 To search this castle grim and dread,

I seeret swore within my soul
 No force in man, no fiend's control—
 Should make me either pause or rest
 'Till I had sped through all my quest;
 And none of force that they control
 Shall make me perjure my true soul;
 Nor shall they ever dull the zest
 For glory throbbing in my breast.
 With my good sword my path I'll hew,
 Though foes unnumbered rise to view;
 And die, or honor's path pursue,
 Nor reek I who shall mourn or rue
 The way I tread, all those I harm
 Deeds of true glory cannot charm.
 Back I'd not turn for all the hoard
 That mortals own in nature broad,
 'Till I have all this place explored,
 And glory won with my good sword;
 'Till all shall fall beneath its sway,
 He said, and moved upon his way.

XVIII.

On through wastes of bowers and halls,
 That vaster grow as they proceed—
 Where paintings hang on all the walls,
 And eyes with chanting beauty feed;
 Where through silken screens the sunlight falls
 On mimic forest, field and mead,
 On mountain glen that rock enthalls,
 Those twain in utter silence speed.
 There wrought in wax are forests seen,
 Standing on all those spacious floors—
 Glowing on high with native green,
 As when they bloom o'er hills and moors;

There gum and beech and poplar tall,
The chestnut, oak and lofty pine,
The cedar, maple, ash and all
That grow on glen or steep incline;
While over all their heads doth crawl
The binding folds of spreading vine,
While at their feet from wall to wall
The dark green, glossy grasses shine,
And flowers of every shape and hue
Are 'midst those spreading forests seen.
The yellow, crimson, white and blue
Bloom on their stems of lifelike green;
And spacious orchards bloom around—
The cherry, apple, peach and pear,
With lifelike fruit or blossoms crown'd,
On high their stately heads they rear—
And there blooming gage and plum
Threw round their branches tough and firm
With life-like tears of oozing gum,
That spread o'er every bole and limb.
And waved the tall acacia round,
The palm, the orange and the lime—
All trees and shrubs in nature found,
That bud and bloom in every clime.

XIX.

Then next they see a forest wide,
That on a rocky mountain stands—
It covers all its dark brown side,
As planted there by nature's hands;
'Tis autumn there, the trees are bare
Of dark green leaves and bloomy spray,
But suns and frosts have smitten there,
And turn'd them red and brown and gray;

But ample fruit their branches load,
In clusters from each limb 'tis hung,
And over all its soil 'tis strowed
In rich and grand abundance flung.
And then amidst a seeming fen,
Where nuts and acorns strew the ground,
Unnumbered wild hogs make their den,
And view their paradise around.
Then next, unmeasured wastes they see
Where grass seems ever waving green,
There all earthly monsters wander free
As in the wilds of nature seen:
The lion, elephant and bear,
The tiger and the kangaroo,
With hyenas, seem to wander there
With rhinoceros and leopard too;
And every beast that mortals fear,
Or lonely jungles bring to view:
And lifelike there they all appear,
As if they in the jungle grew.

XX.

Next meets the eye a field of wheat
That rears its ripen'd ears on high,
And near it brown'd with rain and heat.
Waves ripe a waste of lofty rye;
And all around the reapers stand
With arm unto the elbow bared,
The shining sickle fills one hand,
The other with cut grain appear'd.
Next, fields of corn in even rows
Stately in tassel'd bloom is seen,
The same as on the moor it grows
When waving in its pride of green.

And oft the waving blades disclose
The plowman with his team between,
Or youths and maids with shining hoes,
And all of sprightly mortal mien;
Some, while seen to wave the blades above
Their heads and hide them from the rest,
Received their harmless kiss of love
From those they seem to prize the best.
Then next a hoary lodge arose
Half seen amidst a lofty grove,
Its front a shallow river shows
Whose waters over pebbles rove.
And far to left and far to right,
Where e'er the searching eye may view,
Vast herds of cattle rise to sight
'Midst pastures rich as ever grew;
There lifelike stood the stately steer,
With hidden ribs and glossy hide;
There seem'd the steeds in swift career,
With heads erect and nostrils wide,
All startled into mortal fear,
By eagles flying at their side.
And there 'midst pastures rich and rare
Were mighty herds of kine espied;
And sheep unnumbered thronged the scene,
With skipping lambs that round them play'd,
While clad from head to heel in green
The watchful shepherds near them stray'd.
But who can limn the varied scenes
That rose to view amidst those halls?
That rose in wax-work or on screens,
Or canvas vast, along those walls?

E'en there the bounding ship careens,
On it the rolling billow falls—
The bending mast o'er ocean leans,
Through it the flying surge recalls;
The clouds around the sun are roll'd,
Yet comes enough of glancing ray
To light the waves by storms controll'd,
And gild their crest with sparkling spray;
While on that vessel's foamy wake
Huge whales from ocean rise to view,
O'er their grim forms the surges break,
And o'er these screams the white seamew.
The tattered sail on flying gale
Still clinging to the lonely mast,
The trembling crew, the helmsman pale,
Seem living on the canvas cast;
Each seems to breathe, and stand alive
Upon that vessel's wave-washed deck,
And did with all their power strive
To fight the floods that would them wreck;
That would her unto ruin drive,
If left to winds and billow's beek.
Next rose a mountain scene sublime,
Adown whose lofty woody slope,
Like fairies of the olden time,
Came fawn and spotted antelope;
From peak to peak, from crag to crag,
That bold and high stand o'er the rest,
Was seen the goat and bounding stag,
And eagle soaring o'er her nest.
While like the witch or midnight hag,
The owl stared from a rock's high crest;

While their huge length grim serpents drag,
 With heads erect, for victims quest;
With flaming tongues and glaring eyes
 Their folds around their prey they coil;
And darting from the canvas rise,
 As in some sultry native soil.
Next battle-scenes the walls assume:
 Glittering axe and spear and shield,
And blazing helm and nodding plume,
 With flaming swords flash o'er the field;
Sheathed are the men from head to heel,
 In armor bright as flashing flame—
With mighty shields of brass and steel,
 Where sevenfolds together came;
And riveted so sure and fast
 No spear nor mace nor axe nor sword—
Could their strong ties asunder cast,
 Nor pierce nor break the egis broad.
The armies were together roll'd,
 In mixed, confused and dread affray—
Through morions bright and helms of gold
 Both axe and falchion made their way;
And over field and gory wold
 Unnumbered dead and dying lay;
And on those dead the chargers tread,
 And crush out reeking brains and gore
And the blood of the dying spread
 With their iron hoofs upon the moor.
And over steeds and riders bold
 Thick grows the dust and gory spray,
As plain the twain the scenes behold:
 As there were men and waging fray;

Cloyed of the scenes around these roll'd,
 With keener haste they speed their way;
 Past a huge hall were breezes troll'd,
 From walls vast fabrics rich and gay—
 Silks, satins, velvets and cashmeres,
 And plumes and furs of gaudy shade:
 All Carthage, Tyre and Sidon's wares,
 Where were the richest fabrics made.
 Past these in haste the twain move on,
 Through many a strange and winding way
 Where gaud, forever and anon
 They view, no matter where they stray;
 When lo, their way is cross'd once more
 By door of strange and massive size,
 And with letters cast in golden ore
 This strange inscription meets their eyes:

INSCRIPTION:

Rash adventurer, would thou dare
 The secrets of these halls behold,
 Thyself thou must of armor bare,
 And wrap thee in a silken fold;
 No mail-clad hero enters here,
 Helmet of neither steel nor gold;
 No glittering shield nor sword nor spear,
 As worn by heroes strong and bold;
 But he who enters here in steel
 Must first aloud this trumpet blow,
 And when these halls have heard its peal,
 'Twill fearful odds against him throw!
 So, rash adventurer, turn thee back,
 Nor seek to view the prophet's shrine—
 Return upon thy journeyed track,
 While life and liberty are thine.

XXII.

Such words as those might shake with fear
 He who never a danger dared,
Who never lifted a sword or spear,
 Nor the perils of battle shared;
But I hold them as idle things,
 And from me I cast them away—
Heed them little as shadow from wings
 Of the magpie, sparrow or jay.
This mighty trumpet I shall blow,
 Its loudest music send abroad—
All odds it shall against me throw,
 I'll nobly face with my good sword.
With that a mighty trump he raised
 Within his hand, 'twas wrought of gold,
That lay before the door, and blazed
 With diamonds gorgeous to behold;
A mighty trump of wondrous size,
 And of enchanting beauty wrought—
A richer and more costly prize
 Was never yet to monarch brought.
Around and round that trump he turn'd,
 And view'd it o'er from end to end—
Where gems of flashing brightness burn'd,
 And did with every color blend.
Then said, No living thing I've seen
 'Midst all this waste of gaudy show,
Though oft behind some silken screen
 Methought there lurked a secret foe;
But when with ready sword I sought
 The form, and rightly did survey,
I found of wax or brass 'twas wrought,
 Of marble or of lifeless clay.

The work of Roman or of Greek,
Or of some cunning race of men,
Who mould the forms that seem to speak,
And seem to mortal being ken.
If sound of this to me will bring
The likeness of a human thing,
With blood and thlew and being warm,
Then let it come, as come it will,
With fear it shall not make me thrill:
However dreadful be the form,
He said, and blew a blast as shrill
As e'er through gorges of a hill
Has piped the breath of furious storm.

XXIII.

From turret to foundation stone
Shook all beneath that trumpet's tone,
As if the walls and solid rock
Were shaken by an earthquake shock;
And swifter than a flash of flame
The massive door wide open came.
It and the vast partition flew
Back to the walls, and spread to view
A lofty and enormous hall;
Where o'er its floors from wall to wall
Arose an army vast, arrayed
In gleaming steel, whose lustre made
A brightness all that place pervade,
As if it all was wrapt in flame;
And fire, whose sheen might put to shame
The brightest earthly blaze that man
Can into gleaming embers fan.
O'er his eyes his hand the hero raised,
To shield them from the sheen that blazed,

And long his searching gaze he threw
On splendor that there met his view:
There rank behind rank, line on line,
Both horse and foot in armor shine—
Enormous steeds and riders grim,
Of towering form and giant limb;
High o'er their helms the gaudy plumes,
Of every color wrought that blooms
In nature's reign, there waving rise
In untold splendor; with surprise
He views the enormous plates of steel
That arm those forms from head to heel,
The bossy shields of massive strength,
And swords of wondrous breadth and length.

XXIV.

Foremost of all, five columns deep,
Huge spearmen stand, the horsemen keep
From the approach of charging foe,
Their gleaming spears all ranged arow—
Levelled and far advanced reveal
A horrid front of gleaming steel;
So close their points together shine
No man between could pass their line,
And in their front a breastwork stood
Of craggy rocks and beams of wood.
Keen looked the gallant knight, but he
No signs of life could 'mongst them see;
Where e'er he look'd nought they reveal
But lifeless images in steel!
Nor do their close up visors show
One sign of eyes that flash or glow,
Nor from their chargers' nostrils wide
Is single sign of breath espied;

Silent as death they block'd the pass,
And were but forms of steel and brass.

XXV.

Again the glittering trump he blew,
And straight that host in motion threw:
The horsemen swift their falchions drew,
And seem dread murmurs from them flew,
As brandished high their weapons gleam
Bright as the flames the lightnings stream:
There poised on high each shining brand
Rests still, as waiting some command;
While to and fro that host of spears
A moment moves, then straight appears
All sign of life from 'mongst them fled,
And tomblike silence 'mongst them spread.
Again the trump he blew; no more
They moved in action as before;
Again, again, with deafening sound,
That trumpet's music sped around;
But not a sign of life it brought,
It not a sign of action wrought
Amongst those grisly forms of steel.
Moveless they stand from head to heel;
And all in postures stand alike,
Ready to charge, to thrust or strike.

XXVI.

Then spoke the knight, half roused to wrath:
I swore no force should stop my path
By either man or fiend controll'd,
And true unto my oath I'll hold.
On yonder grisly host I'll charge,
And through it make an opening large;

I'll stir them into motion grim,
If they be things of form and limb;
Nor shall they block my onward road
'Till greater signs of life are show'd;
And I have tried their strength of limb,
He said, and from the breast-work grim,
Which stood that host of spears before,
A rock of mighty mass he tore,
High o'er his head the rock he rear'd—
Poised in his hand, the rock appeared
Craggy and weighty, vast and dread;
Three times he whirls it round his head,
While backward bending for the throw—
Then hurls it with terrific blow:
Full on the line of spears it flew,
And clear'd its path their columns through:
Down spear and spearmen went amain,
Nor from the floor rose up again;
Broken beneath the ruin dread
Around is shattered armor spread.
Another mighty crag he threw,
Which full upon a horseman flew,
And down he went; then strange to tell
But true, each steed and rider fell
Prone on that floor; with horrid clang
The fallen mass of armor rang;
But not one groan nor dying pang
The hero heard, as swift he sprang
Upon his foes, with trump and sword,
And mimic men and steeds explored.

XXVII.

Onward, through bowers grand and gay,
Again the twain pursue their way;

When soon they gain'd a lofty shrine
Round which did beads unnumbered shine.
Decked o'er with erimson, gold and green
High o'er the shrine a cross was seen;
And round the altar broad and high
Hung flowing screen of every dye,
Of every color, hue and shade
That e'er the looms of nations made
Which o'er that lofty altar threw
A varied and a blending hue.
High on a velvet crimson throne,
Set round with many a precious stone
Of topaz and of diamond sheen,
The prophet of the place was seen.
White was his robe as fleecy snow,
And white o'er it his beard did flow;
And past his knees his beard hung down,
E'en to the borders of his gown;
His head was hoar as is the fur
That hangs from out the thistle's burr,
And over eyes as black as night
His shaggy brows flowed long and white;
His haughty forehead, high and broad,
Denoted knowledge 'neath it stored;
Save Roman nose, no other trace
For beard was seen of all his face—
So dense it grew o'er all its lair,
It hid features haggard with despair:
Nor could you tell if joy or woe,
Or which grim pang we mortal know,
It was that lit his eyes so bright,
And gave to them such glaring light:
Still as the grave he kept his chair,
And eyed the fast approaching pair.

XXVIII.

Before his shrine the twain appeared
And gazed on him with hoary beard.
I do believe, the knight began,
That yonder bent and hoary man,
Were I to hurl him from his throne,
We'd find him wax or brass or stone—
Like all the rest that we have seen,
Although his eyes look bright and keen
When e'er on them I cast my view.
As thus he spoke, the trump he blew:
Sent sound terrific, wild and strong
Through all those towers broad and long,
And back were countless echoes thrown
As if unnumbered trumps were blown;
Through all those towers rang their sound,
While shook the massive walls around.
From off his throne the prophet sprang,
And seized a gleaming sword,
With voice strong as that trumpet's clang
Thus sent his voice abroad:

XXIX.

Dog of an unbelieving Jew,
Whose race of old the Saviour slew—
Who to the cross the Saviour nailed,
And at His anguish mocked and railed
And Him with blow and curse assailed,
His agony with rapture hailed!
Thou art the man who, when the crowd
Bore Christ along, cried to Him aloud:
Haste, to Thy crucifixion go,
And on Him dealt thy cruel blow:

When thus thou hadst the Saviour spurn'd,
On thee His eye: a moment turn'd;
And said He, Simon, here remain
Until I shall return again!
And here thou hast been since that day,
And 'till He comes thou here must stay;
Feared by the young, loathed by the old,
Roam earth like phantom of the wold;
On earth thy form no shadow throws,
And none of rest thy wandering knows.
Dog of an unbelieving Jew,
How darest thou come within my view?
Dost thou not dread once more to feel
The scalding oil and burning steel,
And all the pangs that we prepare
For thy accursed race who dare
Within these sacred towers tread,
E'en though they should be captives led?
Like all of thy accursed race
That ever looked upon my face,
And untold thousands there have gazed
Since I unto this throne was raised,
Thy fate shalt be and thou shalt feel
Pangs which no language can reveal;
All throes that writhe the human form
Shall fall on thee in one grim storm.
Here seven times thou hast appeared,
Here seven times my presence dared:
Six times thou hast escaped my wrath—
Fled from here by some secret path,
But this, the seventh, is the last
My threshold shalt by thee be past.
This time thy grisly doom is seal'd,

And thou thy cursed life shall yield,
Thou unbelieving dog of sin.
At this the hoary guide broke in
Thou, Terentius Aulus, whom
To death would all the Hebrews doom,
Thou, worst of all thy race and line,
Though styled the Prophet of the Shrine,
Thou cursed fiend of cruel Rome,
True, 'tis the last time here I roam,
At least, the last time I shall see
The likeness here of such as thee:
For it is prophesied of old
The seventh time I tread this hold,
I with me the power shall bring
That shall thy sway to ruin fling;
That I should break each subtle spell
That thou hast lured to earth from hell.
That I through strength of knight renown'd,
A hero of the Table Round,
Should all thy force and fraud o'erthrow
And cast thy pride forever low,
Set every pining captive free
Of every nation held by thee;
And here I come that deed to do,
In me thy awful ruin view—
For those prophecies I'll perform
In spite of earthquake, flood or storm;
In spite of all the fraud or force
Such as thou bringest to bar my course.
Thy strongest heroes now are low,
'This good knight wrought their overthrow,
And none throughout thy towers broad
Now lives to draw 'gainst me the sword

But thine old hand, so weak with age
I fear no strife that it can wage.

XXX.

Fell lightning fill'd the Prophet's eye,
Shot forth like flame from sable sky,
His form to its full height he rear'd
And from its sheath his sword he bared;
Some hasty steps he forward made,
Then paused, and sheathed again his blade.
I would, he said, have cleaved thy head
And thy cursed form to dogs have fed,
But all too easy were such death
For such as thee: thy hated breath
Shall leave thy all accursed frame
With throes that only hell can tame.
Thy form shall feel unnumbered pains,
I'll bind thee down with red-hot chains;
Of boiling water thou shalt drink,
Then quaff of molten lead and zinc;
Thy limbs from thee I'll piecemeal hew
And thou shalt eat those pieces too;
Thou'lt have them served in fry and stew,
A food most fit for cursed Jew.
Base unbeliever, boasts thou then
This hero overcame my men,
That all my giants huge of limb
And statues terrible and grim,
Were overthrown by knight renown'd
From Arthur of the Table Round.
Why, were the story even true,
Thou unbelieving, cursed Jew,
The avenging hordes of mighty Rome
Would hunt the craven to his home,

Would tear him from King Arthur's hall
And crush him to an atom small—
As is the frailest grain of sand
That yet from earth a tempest fann'd,
As ever found in any land
In desert wilds or ocean's strand.
Think ye, because the menial crew
I held beneath my sway ye slew,
That ye have crush'd each magic spell
With which I force of foemen quell?
With which I too have guarded long
From Arthur's hand these towers strong?
Yes, this last hold in Britain's land
Of Roman power and command?
Rome, the grand mistress of the world,
Whose banner shall be yet unfurl'd
In glory, power and might once more
As erst it was on every shore;
And teach rebellious nations round
To tremble when her name they sound.
Ha! thought ye, when my curs ye slew,
Ye all my pride and might o'erthrew?
That no reserve at all I held
By which be such as ye repelled,
Or into humble captives quell'd?
I'll teach you I have yet the force
To vanquish you and stop your course.
He ceased, and on a buckler broad
With force terrific smote his sword;
The sound from out that clanging shield
Around like rolling thunders pealed,
When through the wilds with night o'er spread
They echo long and deep and dread;

Through all the place its deafening clang
Like din from thousand anvils rang,
And countless streams of ruddy flame
Around that shrine terrific came.
Still louder from that clanging shield
The deafening sounds of thunder pealed,
While keener flashed the blinding light
And dazzled each beholder's sight;
But hissing flame the twain behold
Which round that shrine unearthly rolled,
While awful figures from it came—
Terrific spectres wrought of flame,
Which seem surcharged with demon rage,
And there infernal conflict wage;
Then swift as thought mount through the air,
And flaming from the shrine repair,
Then towards the open windows fly
And vanish from each gazer's eye.
Soon ceased the all unearthly sound,
And died the flame that shrine around;
Each eager looked, but neither man
Could anywhere that prophet scan;
But all the shrine was singed and black,
Showed plain the flames' destroying track.
High o'er the shrine still hung the shield
From whence those sounds of thunder peal'd,
But no trace did all that shrine afford
Of the Prophet and his gleaming sword.

PART III.

I.

A silence dismal and profound
Settled o'er all those towers round,
As there those twain surprised, amazed,
On the scorched shrine together gazed;
And saw how sudden and how strange
The Prophet from their gaze withdrew
As o'er the scenes their visions range
They scarce believe the change they view
Upon the shrine the hero strode
And with his broadsword smote the shield;
Though heavy was the blow bestowed
No slightest sound from out it pealed;
It gave no more of jar or sound
Than feather smote on fleecy snow.
Again, again he smote, but found
No sound at all for him would flow.
Once more upon the trump he blew
A blast as loud and deep and long
As ever yet from trumpet flew
By breath of mortal hero strong;
And save the echoes from that blast
That came from all the turrets round,
'Midst all those vaulted towers vast
Was heard no other stir nor sound.
All void of life those towers seem'd,
No living object in them stirred;

Though bright o'er them the noon sun beam'd
There moved not e'en the sound of bird.
All within, all without was void
Of stir or sound as is the tomb,
And not a zephyr's breath destroyed
The grave-like rest that there employed
The banners hung around that room,
And curtains that hung the casement round,
Where breeze of motion left no trace.
As if to wake again with sound
The awful stillness of the place
Again the mighty horn he blew
And sent its music far and wide,
Then forward on their questing drew
That hero and his hoary guide.

II.

Through lonely ways, up winding stairs
The twain their path pursued,
And rooms piled up in lofty tiers
With searching eyes they viewed.
Around where e'er their visions fell
Gaudy fabrics met their gaze,
From ceilings and from walls as well
Like sunset clouds they blaze.
There it seem'd as if all the wares
That ever came from looms,
Silks, satins, velvets and cashmeres,
Were gathered in those rooms;
Fabrics of every style e'er wove,
Of every shade and hue,
Display those rooms where e'er they rove,
Where e'er their eyes pursue.

Yet, vainly of living thing they strove
To find a single elue.

III.

At length they reached a spacious hall,
Of snow-white marble was the wall;
The floor was marble-white as frost,
Or foam upon the surges tost.
It seemed so perfect, white and clean
It never foot of man had seen,
Nor speck of dust the winds had thrown
Upon that white and polished stone.
And over all that spacious floor
Were gravened battle-scenes of yore,
The ceilings and the lofty walls
Where e'er the searching vision falls—
The sculptor's busy hand had wrought,
And all with scenes of battles fraught;
Men and steeds seemed starting from the wall,
Woke to action by the trumpet's call.
Their armies meet in fierce career
With lifted shield and levelled spear,
With mace and club and axe and sword
They spread their carnage long and broad.
There heroes seemed to speak and breathe,
And fiercely there their swords unsheathe,
There face to face they lifelike stand
With hilt firm grasped within their hand.
The armies seem to move along,
And seems to neigh the charger strong
And move his nostrils wide,
And rife the minstrel seems with song
Amidst the battle tide.

The stormy trumpets seem to blow,
The banners seem to wave,
The archer seems to bend his bow,
His mark, a hero brave.
And here and there a combat grim
Is on that marble seen,
By monster of enormous limb
And hero waged between.
Beneath a hero's sword lies slain
A dragon huge and dread,
Cleft is his grisly form in twain,
And cleft his horrid head.
But vainly words could limn the scenes
Graved on those lofty walls,
For mortal language has no means
To paint aright those halls;
Yes, limn aright each wonderous sight
The vision meets where e'er it falls.

IV.

Long wrapt in pleasing thought profound
The hero viewed the scenes around,
He viewed them all with strange delight,
For such 'till then ne'er met his sight.
The sun went down and night apace
Was brooding o'er that marvellous place,
Ere from those scenes on marble shown
The hero's raptured gaze was thrown.
Then round he viewed those halls so wide,
But nowhere saw his hoary guide,
On right, on left he searched the place
But of his guide he found no trace.
To blow that trump thrice he essayed
But not for him a sound it made,

In spite of him 'twas void of sound
As were the marble walls around.
But through the black and solid gloom
That there pervaded all that room,
He then saw a flickering light
Swift stream upon the folds of night;
Soon more intense its brightness grew
'Till light it round like sunshine threw,
And made the sculptured walls around
Gleam with a lustre all profound;
It seem'd that bright and waving glare
In motion put the armies there,
And all around that mighty room
Seemed moving, banner, spear and plume;
Streamed on the blast the charger's mane
As high he leaped o'er mounds of slain,
And motion seem'd o'er all the wall
And floor, where e'er the gaze might fall.
But to whence had burst that ruddy light
Swift onward sped the gallant knight.

V.

Along a passage bright as day
In haste the hero made his way;
Though dazzling brightness round him fell
Whence came the light he could not tell;
No trace at all his vision caught
To show where all that light was wrought,
But where it seemed it keenest burned
Full on its end the passage turned;
And here two mighty doors were seen
Of wondrous length and breadth, I ween.
Each door was wrought of polished ore,
And each a strange inscription bore;

Plainly on them the words were scrolled
And all the letters wrought of gold.
First that on the left the hero scanned
While o'er his eyes he raised his hand,
To shield them from the blinding glare
That waving light engendered there.

INSCRIPTION:

Pleasure and ease and raptures rare
Are his who dares to enter here;
No toil nor strife shall e'er annoy
All those who tread this hall of joy;
No clash of arms nor trumpet's sound
Shall break its harmony profound.
Who loves not peace and pleasures rare
Must dare not think to enter here;
And those who seek for ancient lore
Or knowledge of the days of yore,
Or waste their time in wisdom's bower,
Here shall not dwell one fleeting hour.
Only those whom pleasures cannot cloy
Shall dare to tread this hall of joy!
Said the knight, as he read it o'er,
I there would scroll a line or more:
That only those should enter here
Who deem sloth and ease raptures rare;
Who feel no remorse nor pangs of grief
For time ill spent though life is brief,
And glides away from mortal man
As doth quicksilver from his spar;
Who ne'er seem to think, for the time
They waste upon this mortal clime,
They must some day a reckoning show
To Him who did that life bestow.

Only those who deem sloth no sin
Should dare that hall to enter in.
Were I indeed to enter there
I'd wake with din its atmosphere;
I'd change the order of all things
Within it found, queens and kings,
Beasts and birds with claws or wings,
Anything that walks, crawls or springs
That I should meet within that hall
Should learn to loathe sloth's dismal thrall,
And see it from his nature spurned.
This said the knight, and swift he turned
To read the strange inscription o'er
That gleamed upon the other door.
But far less plain its words were scrolled
And formed of steel instead of gold,
But polished all as bright were they
As is the broadsword whet for fray,
Or was that hero's morion bright
That flash beneath that waving light,
And seemed as bright a sheet of flame
As e'er from blazing furnace came.
To screen his eyes his mailed hand
The hero raised while this he scanned:

INSCRIPTION:

Mortal, be thou a fool or knave,
Or one to whom God wisdom gave,
Be thou to fear a crouching slave,
Or yet the bravest of the brave;
Who would all grimmest dangers dare,
Whose soul's a fount of virtues rare,
To enter this dread door beware!
Turn back, thyself from dangers spare.

Art thou a hero grand, whose name
Is written on the rolls of fame?
And there shall blaze like living flame
'Till time grows halt and nature lame,
Whose praise shall glow while shines the sun,
While breezes blow, or waters run,
Then keep the honor thou has won
And these dread halls forever shun.
Mortal, hast thou a spirit fraught
With truths the ancient sages taught,
A spirit all of glory wrought,
Daring deed and generous thought,
A soul conceived and born and rear'd
In temperance and toil, prepared
'Midst virtues freedom fann'd and aired,
And sunned and for them constant cared;
And dost thou seek to place thy name
Eternal on the heights of fame?
For it would brave both flood and flame,
Grim fiends, disease and hunger tame,
Then open wide this iron door,
Nor heed thou how its hinges roar,
Right swiftly pass its threshold o'er
But back thou canst return no more.
If strong thy arm and keen thy sword,
And fear is from thy soul ignored,
Thou'lt burst the grim magician's fraud
That reigns through all these towers broad.
Good knight and true, pursue thy course,
And through this door thy journey force;
When creaks its hinges harsh and hoarse,
Twill bring to tyrants grim remorse.

VI.

When thrice the hero had read o'er
The strange inscription on that door,
Thus to himself he muttered low:
Let it betide me weal or woe
I through this door my way must wend,
Though 'gainst me hell its hosts shall send.
I'll not turn back nor fear nor quail
But meet all odds that dare assail;
I've still gone, let it fail or thrive,
The way that reason seem'd to drive
Since first myself I rightly knew,
And reason bids me now pursue
This course and pass this doorway through,
And as she dictates, I shall do.
In me as one are strength and will,
And daring courage, nerve and skill,
Those things alone by me are feared
Out of which evils may be rear'd,
My nature doth all sins ignore
And evils of all kinds abhor,
No evil unto God nor man
Shall breathe in all my nature's plan;
And not a thought shall rise in me
I should fear God or man to see,
For this my soul ne'er harbored fear,
Courage and daring deed are there;
And ne'er a scene I've yet beheld
That in the least my courage quelled,
Though I've faced fire, war and storm,
And beasts of every size and form
Alone on mountain and in glen,
On flood and fever-reeking fen.

But no man feels the least of fear
For dangers cast around him here,
Whatever land by him be trod
Who has abiding faith in God.
Into this world man comes alone
A feeble being and unknown,
A stranger landed on a shore
Where perils throng his path before,
Against which he must bravely cope,
Led on his way by faith and hope;
So, when he dies he goes alone
A stranger in a land unknown.
Through faith and hope he treads the sphere
Nor fears what he'll encounter there;
So through this door I now shall go,
See what beyond it it doth show,
Let beasts or demons bar my way
They shall not hold this arm at bay;
Nor heroes of gigantic limb,
Strong as dragons and as grim,
Dreadful as ever stalked in mail
Or yet in fray did foe assail,
Through valor, strength and hope and faith
I'll quell force of beast, man or wraith,
No force nor fraud nor hate nor wrath
Here through this place shall bar my path.

VII.

With that his force the hero threw
Against the door, which open flew,
While loud through all those halls around
The grating of its hinges sound,
Terrific as the earthquake shock
When it bursts up the solid rock,

And sends it scattered far and wide
In fragments down the mountain's side.
With horrid jar and deafening sound
The door did 'gainst the wall rebound.
And scarce he'd past the threshold o'er
Than straight again was closed the door,
And all unearthly was the jar
Of swift returning bolt and bar;
Each to its place like lightning flew
By hands invisible, which threw
An iron beam across the door,
And it into its fastenings bore.
And in a place to him unknown
Once more that hero stood alone,
To him it seemed a mighty hall,
But light was dead and silent all,
And vain his eyes the place explored;
Yet, o'er the floor with his good sword
He felt his way, and he had strode
Some thirty paces on his road,
When to his lips the trump he drew
And once again upon it blew;
But 'twas no longer dead to sound,
It sent a blast those halls around
Terrific as old ocean's waves
Assaulting all their rocky caves,
When stirring earthquakes move their shore
And storm fiends shriek above their roar.
From turret to foundation stone
Shook all beneath that trumpet's tone,
As if a whirlwind there had blown
And everything in motion thrown
The walls, the ceilings and the floors;

And sounds as of a thousand doors
On noisy, grating hinges hung
Seemed on a sudden open flung,
'Gainst walls with force immense they bound
And shake the place with jarring sound;
While figures move from room to room,
And voices whisper through the gloom,
Then closed again the doors are thrown
And silence there once more is known.
An awful silence like the tomb
Reigned grim o'er all that solid gloom,
On darkness dread that filled the place
The hero gazed a moment's space!

VIII.

Now through the place a brightness glows
And, lo! all unearthly phantoms rose,
Which in a group together came,
Their hair seemed waving founts of flame
Which cast a fearful light abroad
And gloom from all that place ignored;
Still brighter o'er those phantom forms
Like fire poured by roaring storms,
The flame rose up a column vast
As that from out volcano cast,
While on its top a spirit came
Which seemed half formed of smoke and flame,
But all his face from sight was veiled
By mist and flame that round it sailed,
In its right hand a skull it bore
Which ever streamed with reeking gore,
Which downward pour'd in steady flow
Upon the heads of those below,

Which as it touched them burned and hissed
And formed a cloud of awful mist;
Did just such sound and sight reveal
As water poured on burning steel.
In his left hand a book he held
Which aye from it the flame repelled,
Where e'er that book the spectre moved
The flame to it all harmless proved;
Far back from it the fire rolled
As though it there the flame controlled,
Held it and all its tongues at bay,
O'er all its force kept boundless sway.

IX.

Down o'er that peak of flame enorm
The spectre leaned his awful form,
And in the ears of those below
From him some whispered accents flow;
Each spectre forward leaned his ear
As all intent that voice to hear,
But what he said no single word
The wonder-stricken hero heard.
Open that book the spectre threw
And held it to the other's view,
Forward he leaned and on it gazed
With eyes that red with fury blazed;
Then seem'd their horrid forms to writhe
Like serpents 'neath the reaper's scythe,
And from them burst a wail of woe
Dreary and weird as blasts that blow
At midnight o'er the gloomy plain,
And sigh through the hair of the slain;
And from them burst this wail of doom
Which like a storm swept through the room.

X.

Lower, dreadful hour, fatal day,
All our power has past away,
All, all the arts that Merlin taught
This day are unto ruin brought;
As wizards prophesied of old,
As in this awful book foretold,
Here before our eyes revealed
Our doom has come, our fate is sealed.
We perish all by knight renowned,
A hero of the Table Round,
And shall we tamely let that power fall
That long has held the world in thrall?
Shall we from out this hold be driven
And all our force to dust be given,
Ere we with Arthur's knight have striven
And proved his helm cannot be riven?
No, by all the powers that dwell
Throughout the burning realms of hell,
And those of intramundane air
While we have life we'll not despair.
We'll teach the world the force we wield,
Can cleave asunder helm and shield,
Can break the spear and rend the sword
Of any mortal knight or lord.
Up, up and wage infernal strife,
Nor tamely fall while we have life,
But bid our force on mortals storm.
Loud shrieked the grim, terrific form
That rose above that fount of flame—
As far more dread his front became,
Ten thousand serpents breathing fire
Wreathed around his statue dire,

Down fell the skull of reeking gore
On flames below with hissing roar,
And far and wide its horrid spray
Flashed round in sparks of blinding ray;
Down fell the book the spectre held
With sounds that had all thunder quelled,
It smote the flame, then swift recoiled
And rose from out the flame unsoiled,
Unsing'd by flames it rose in space,
There stood as on some solid base,
By hand unseen 'twas opened wide
And writing large and plain espied;
Slowly leaf by leaf each page was turn'd,
But ere the hero had discerned
The import of the writing there,
Dark mists began to fill the air;
Round it rose clouds black as night
And hid it from the hero's sight;
But still he heard the pages turned
Right roughly o'er as they were spurned
In anger by the spirits there,
Or force that held that tome in the air;
But at times 'tis seen through the night
Encircled with flashes of light,
Like the moon in the clouds of the storm
'Midst paths where the thunders form.

XI.

Down from his columns of fire
Bent forward that spirit in ire,
The winds lifted his flaming hair
And spread it on the gloomy air
Like the comet's fiery tail;

His features were ghastly and pale,
As seen by the light of that place,
Horrible and grim was his face;
Disappointment, terror, despair
O'er his dread visage made their lair,
And light from his terrible eyes
Was fierce as the flames that arise
From lips of the crater at night
Whelming vales with lava and light.
His nostrils poured vapors of death,
And pestilence streamed from his breath;
The serpents that twined round his form
Had tongues as lightnings of the storm.

XII.

He bent forward his towering height
And lean'd above the wondering knight,
Lifted on high his flaming spear
Huge as a pine the mountains rear,
But ere it on the hero came
Swift as thought or a flash of flame,
The good knight drew his gleaming sword
And through it cut a passage broad;
With deafening sound down fell the spear
And on the creaking floor found lair,
Then swifter far than speeds the storm
He sped upon that awful form,
And down his sword he brought amain
And lopped the horrid shape in twain.
Grisly sight did that shape reveal—
To the path of the gleaming steel,
The form sped shapeless into air
Like column of mist on marshy lair—

That the winds drive over the plain,
And the warm sun dissolves in rain.

XIII.

Loud was his shriek of grim despair
As shapeless he rolled into air,
Shook all that vast place at the sound,
As earthquakes were stirring around,
And all hell was shrieking in wrath:
As the thunder's ruddy, grim path,
Seen at night in cloud of the storm,
Sped the sword through the spectre's form;
As the lightning's terrible light
Leaves behind no path to the sight,
Shows the clouds united in form
As borne on the car of the storm;
So that form no wound did reveal,
Or retain from the course of the steel,
As shapeless together it flew
And far from the hero withdrew,
Sped forth evermore from his view;
Grew extinct 'neath night's sable frown
As the spark when the rocket falls down.

XIV.

Sounds had ceased, the spirits had fled,
Whose flaming hair such brightness had shed,
Yet, where they stood a blue flame burn'd
Which from the place the darkness spurn'd,
Though round a fitful glare it threw
That dreary place the knight could view;
It was a wide, stupendous hall,
Encircled round with sable wall,

And on it hung in strange array
All kinds of armor used in fray;
But all was battered, soiled and worn,
And of all these of brightness shorn,
There hung huge bossy iron shields
Revealing dents from battlefields;
Cleft helms, and breast-plates, broken spears
And swords on which thick rust appears
Huge shirts of mail wrought out of chains,
Bespattered thick with gory stains;
Which even time did not deface:
Ponderous axe and knotty mace
By bow and arrow found a place,
And broken trump and dented horn
Did here and there the wall adorn;
And banners singed by flame and torn
Right thickly o'er that wall were hung
With folds o'er broken armor flung;
And scattered o'er the horrid floor,
Where e'er the hero's eyes explore,
Were seen the ghastly bones of men,
Strown like the leaves on autumn's fen.
And over all the ceiling wide
Were countless marks of flame espied,
The lofty rafters flames had charred,
Its beams had wasting fires scarred,
The roof had holes where flames had burn'd
And through them were the stars discern'd.

XV.

As round the hero's glances range
On scenes of desolation strange,
Scenes all as dreary and as grim
As e'er before were seen by him,

He saw a small white hand repair
To where that book hung poised in air,
Swift down towards him the tome it bore
And opened it his eyes before.
Plain was the writing, bold and large,
And written o'er from marge to marge;
Swift down o'er it his glances range
Until he meets this passage strange:
Thrice blessed is he of mortal seed
Who from this wonderous book shall read
Blessed is that child of mortal birth,
And favored of all sons of earth;
The whole wide world shall sound his fame,
And lasting honors robe his name,
Through countless ages sire to son
Shall tell his deeds of glory won.
He shall triumphant sweep along
The course of time, the theme of song,
And bards shall win immortal fame
Rehearsing glories of his name;
But he who in this book doth read
No easy, slothful life shall lead,
No nights of sleep, no days of rest,
No thoughts of ease must dull the zest .
For glory throbbing in his breast.
He must all toils and dangers meet
And never dream of foul retreat,
Pleasures and rest are not for him,
But days and nights of perils grim.
'Gainst fiend and demon he must cope
By strength of arm and faith and hope,
And when he has to ruin hurled
The demons that annoy the world,

His recompense shall be a crown
Of priceless, immortal renown;
Upon the tallest cliffs of fame
The world shall ever keep his name;
There it shall shine the most sublime
Through all the change and wreck of time,
Like sound upon the torrent's fall
That thunders o'er its granite tall,
His name upon the world's vast tongue
Shall ever more be praised and sung;
And what's life to knight without fame,
Without placing in story his name?
And to live on renowned in song
He must learn to suffer and be strong;
Thou art the first of mortal man
Who ever dared this book to scan,
And art the sole one of his race
Who e'er his eyes on it shall place;
So blest, thrice blest, of mortal seed,
Go, thou, and peril daring deed,
Before thee lies both wealth and fame.
Behind thee perjury and shame!
Pass on, you soon will reach a hall
Where speechless captives dwell in thrall,
And there in bondage they shall be
'Till Knight of Arthur sets them free.
Take up the skull the demon held
And which from it the flame repelled,
It now is full of dragon's gore,
So full that it is brimming o'er,
And bear it with thee to that hall,
Nor let from it an atom fall,

There pour it on a flame that burns
Of yellow hue, 'till white it turns,
And thou shalt set from bondage free
Maids fair as ever man shall see;
Speed on thy way, temptation shun,
Lest thou shouldst ever be undone,
And thou be proven frail as sand.

XVI.

When this he read the small white hand
Straight closed the book and high in air
Did with it from the knight repair,
But placed it where the hero's eye
Could it amidst the gloom descry.
Down leaned the knight and from the floor
He lifted up the skull of gore,
And it upon his journey bore.
O'er whitened bones that round him lay
The eager knight pursued his way,
And as with cautious step and slow
He moved, he sang in accent low:
Man's deeds must ever clothe him still
With immortality, good or ill,
They make him glorious, sublime,
Or loathsome, reeking grim with crime,
Who for earth's highest sphere was born
Must hold her evils all in scorn.
He who seeks Heaven's help to win
Must first himself his task begin,
A happy man earth never knew
Save he who was to nature true.
A good man has no fear of death,
No dread of parting with his breath;

To him death is a darksome road
Leading from out a lone abode
Into those realms of perfect day
Where only God himself holds sway;
Where all is action, life and bliss,
And naught can ever move amiss,
And knowing all these truths sublime,
I stand above the wreck of time,
Fear nothing while I breathe this breath,
And naught beyond the vale of death.
My guide perhaps has me betrayed
Into some fearful ambuscade,
If this be so, I'll teach the knave
That I its force unflinching brave;
Though fearful odds he 'gainst me cast
I'll face them as the oak the blast,
That breaks all storms, however grim
They smite upon its bole and limb—
That king-like rears its structure tall,
While round it trees unnumbered fall;
Though wrecked are forests far and wide,
It stands erect in lordly pride.
But I'll assault this den of crime
With force and energy sublime,
As of storms impetuous and dread
From out conflicting vapors bred,
Grim with their thunder, flame and hail,
That in their might the groves assail,
Break their limbs, hurl them to the ground,
And spread them far and wide around;
Then onward passing to the plain
Up proudly sweeps the dust amain,

And howling darkness spreads on high,
While from it beasts and mortals fly.
From highest roof to lowest base
I'll search through all this ghastly place,
For God will not forbid the deed,
And man and fiends I do not heed.

XVII.

Thus thought the knight as on he sped
Through halls and chambers lone and dread,
Where dismal silence reigned around
As ever in the world was found;
Through lonely, winding colonnades,
Where gloomy stillness all pervades,
The eager knight his way pursued,
Nor breathing mortal thing he view'd;
But still high in air before him,
Amidst the gloom however dim,
He saw the wonderous book proceed
And follow where it seemed to lead.
Guided by it at length he turns
Upon a path where he discerns
A flame that burns of yellow hue
Which round a blinding brightness threw;
Within a lofty hall it glowed
And its vast space in splendor showed,
Through all the hall so wide and broad
All things save splendor were ignored;
Gaud was the sole thing there beheld,
All else was from that place repelled,
Its flashing gaud to shame might bring
Bridal chamber of an Eastern King;

O'er all its ceilings and its walls
Where e'er the hero's vision falls,
Were blazoned, gorgeous and grand
As ever limned by painter's hand:
The sporting nymphs of dale and hill,
Some bathing in a crystal rill,
Life-like through yielding floods they swim,
And through it stretch each glowing limb;
The flood rolls o'er their outstretch'd arms,
And laves, but hides none of their charms;
Some leading fawns o'er mossy green,
Some resting in their caves are seen,
But no robes o'er them the eye assailed,
Each breathed with beauties all unveiled;
O'er their white shoulders stream their hair
Or float upon the fanning air.

Hung canvas' o'er those walls unrolled
On which were limned the loves of old,
There in stately bower or hall
By flowing stream or torrent's fall,
In shady grove or grottoes green
The all enamored pairs are seen,
Each with warm lips to love resigned
Meet in their longing arms entwined,
As lip to lip each lover turned
They showed the flame that in them burned.
Some meet their wanton lover's glance
And kiss with bashful eyes askance;
But sought not in the least to veil
The warmth that doth their breast assail,
Though sun and moon and earth should fall,
And ruin wreck the planets all,

They would not fail that lip to taste
And feel that arm around their waist,
And hot breath on their blushing face,
Nor shun that amorous embrace.

XVIII.

From scenes like these the hero turn'd
His eye, for such his spirit spurn'd,
Around the hall his gaze he threw,
Where greater wonders met his view:
The floor where e'er his vision roll'd
Seem'd pav'd with solid, burnished gold,
And o'er that floor all ranged arow
Were gorgeous couches seen, and show
On each a female form as fair
As ever breathed of mortal air;
Each is arrayed in nature's robe
Decked with all charms from beauties' globe
Each form each glowing charm assumes
That in the realm of beauty blooms;
On crimson pillow lay each head,
And on quilts of blue, green and red
Their snow-white stirless limbs werespread
All helpless on the gaudy bed.
But one there was among them there
Than all the others far more fair,
Tied round her form with studs of gold
Lay a thin gauze of many a fold,
Scarce hides the robe her bosom's snow,
Her ample breasts gleam'd white below,
The fanning airs the robes wav'd wide,
And ceased the swan-like neck to hide;

And that fair form when breezes blew
The faithless robe betrayed to view,
Left that form superb, divinely fair,
Without a robe save balmy air;
O'er her fair cheeks her tresses rolled
In heavy folds, the hue of gold,
Spread o'er the cheeks so white below
They seemed like sunshine cast on snow;
Round was her arm and white as foam
When storms above the billows' roam,
Her small, white, perfect hands were fair—
As ever did a beauty heir,
Fairer hands earth ne'er rear'd before,
Though no glittering gems they wore.

XIX.

Down o'er her head the hero leaned
And gently moved the locks that screened
Nigh all her beauteous face from view,
But as from there those locks he drew
A sudden tremor shook his form
And heaved his breast like wave in storm.
Backward he drew in dread surprise
And on those features fix'd his eyes;
Gazed on that brow and lovely face
Wrought with all angel air and grace,
Viewed those half-open ruby lips
Sweet as the rose that morn's dew sips,
That showed their rows of pearls below
With hue the shade of driven snow.
Scarcely sign of life the form revealed,
And closely were her eyelids sealed,
And seem'd she had no more of breath
Than one upon the couch of death.

Save color that her red lips bore
No other sign of life she wore—
Did nothing else of life reveal.

XX.

Swift doffed the knight his glove of steel,
And with his bare and brawny hand
He felt that brow and features grand,
But all was warm as life; no death
Was there, although she breathed no breath.
As shakes the rose in summer storm
The hero shook that lovely form,
But no sign of life in her stirred,
No move, no breath, no groan, no word.
There lay his love in slumber deep:
Clotilda, in enchanted sleep,
Yea, she the glory of his soul,
The idol of his heart—the goal
For which he deathless glory sought,
And for it through all perils wrought,
That he with his might place her name
Eternal on the throne of fame.
The maid who but three days before
He'd left in Arthur's halls secure
From every danger, foe or pain,
While blood flowed warm in Arthur's vein.
Was it all but a maddened dream
Such as doth to a drunkard seem,
When he lies in the mud supine
O'erwhelmed with reeking fumes of wine,
And grim nightmares, dreadful and strange,
With thunder sound and lightning change,
Oppress his breast and through him range?

XXI.

Was it a dream? or did he see
Clotilda in reality?
Was that the angel form and face,
The paragon of beauty, grace,
The fairest maid since birth of time
Has ever trod this mortal clime;
The kindest heart and purest soul
Through which did ever feelings roll,
The mind through which no thought did flow
But what the whole vast world might know,
For all was pure within its sphere,
And naught it felt was hidden there;
'Twas pure as is the crystal rill
That flows 'neath sunshine down the hill,
That sends forth life to bloomy spray
That bends in arches o'er its way.
Was this the maid? How came she there?
What force? what fraud? what cunning snare
Had brought her 'neath the wizard's thrall,
To lie in that enchanted hall?
Were thoughts that all his soul pervade
As there he viewed the sleeping maid

XXII.

And as he gazed a sense of sleep
He felt all o'er his nature creep;
A drowsy mist oppressed his brain,
Slow moved the blood in every vein.
As if by bolt of lightning spurned
From off the maid his gaze he turned
To where the flame of yellow burned,
And towards it swift as thought he bore
The grinning skull of dragon's gore.

Right in the centre of the hall
Stream'd from a pit in column tall
That fount of flame of yellow hue,
Which light intense around it threw;
High o'er the glowing fount of flame
The skull and hand of hero came,
A moment's space they o'er it soared
Then full on it the blood was poured.
From out the skull the crimson flowed
And no diminished stream it showed;
Though hours past before the flame
From yellow unto white became,
Yet still that skull was full of blood,
Gave forth a never-ending flood;
'Twas fed from some mysterious source,
And flowed with unabating force.

XXIII.

Dreadful and harsh the fire roar'd
As on its flame the blood was poured,
The sparks terrific flew apace
And scattered vast o'er all the place,
As from the cloud the flakes of snow
Descend and hide the fields below;
Then spread around in shapeless drifts
Where over them the tempest shifts;
Fast to the limbs of trees they cling,
And form a crust o'er everything;
So from that flame 'midst deafening sound
The sparks flew over all the ground,
'Till all the place around became
The color of that roaring flame,
And glowed around that spark-strown floor
Like furnace filled with molten ore.

XXIV.

All sudden and swift as the hue
Of a pure vegetable blue
To a green or a red doth change
When there alkalies or acids range,
So sudden, so swift and so strange
The yellow flames to whiteness turned
And with increasing fury burned.
From floor to ceiling shot the flame
And soon the roof a blaze became,
The rafters in a moment's space
Were wrapped within the flames' embrace,
And all the hall around, o'er head
Were cast in conflagration dread.
The iron columns vast and tall
That propped the roof of that vast hall,
The iron beams and girders all
That spann'd the place from wall to wall,
Began to drop in atoms small
Like icicle 'neath sunshine's thrall.
Full on the roaring fount of flame
That hero could not quell or tame,
The reeking skull of gore he threw
And from the blinding flame withdrew;
And on the sleeping mortals there
He gazed in anguish and despair,
They stirred not from their slumber deep,
Did still their death-like silence keep;
To leave them there an hour more
Their race on earth would then be o'er,
Yet, he had strove with all his main
To rouse them, but had toiled in vain.

They slept as rigid and as still
As those who do their coffins fill.
God of my soul; the hero cried
With voice that shook those towers wide;
Must I behold Clotilda's death
Amidst those flames of stifling breath?
O God of all! grant Thou my arm
The force to save her from all harm;
To save her from all pain and dole
Alike of body and of soul.
Grant me the strength this awful hour
To burst the wizard's cursed power,
And rouse them from their slumbers dread
Or bear them from these embers red,
For nothing in this world is wrought
That is with lasting glory fraught,
Be it of body or of thought,
If Thy aid by mortal is not sought
And ever in the action brought;
Yes, all without Thee comes to naught!

XXV.

As spoke the knight, an awful sound
Shook earth and air, and all around;
A blast cold as the storms that freeze
The waters of the Polar seas
Poured round, and in a moment's space
Fill'd up complete that burning place;
A moment more, that frozen air
Expands by heat engendered there—
With force terrific outward throw
The walls that there with fire glow,
With sounds immense to earth are thrown
And into smallest atoms blown;

High up the flaming roof it whirled,
And it far down the mountain hurled,
Scattered like dust before the blast
And o'er the land in fragments cast,
And leave the silent sleepers there
A canopy of sky and air.
Dread in the sky the thunders roll.
And clouds spread round from pole to pole;
Like awful battlements and towers
The dark'ning sky with tempests lowers.
Deep and more deep the darkness grows
The cloudland o'er the heaven throws—
'Till over all its vast domains
An inky, pitchy blackness reigns,
And all the startled world around
Is wrapt in storm and night profound;
With sudden dash a whelming rain
The clouds pour to the earth amain,
On flames the hero could not quell
The pouring floods a deluge fell,
And dashing poured on those as well
Who slept beneath the wizard's spell.
Down mountain, valley, wold and plain
In rivers rushed the flooding rain,
And far away o'er boulders tall
Was heard the roaring water-fall,
As off it swept to valleys drear
That lay amongst those mountains there,
Whose forests vast the driving storm
Did all in wild confusion form,
And made their limbs together clash
With sounds above the thunder's crash.

And stirs the eagle from his nest
That towers o'er the mountain's crest,
He flaps his wings and rears his form
High on the pinions of the storm,
Darts where the thunders roll most loud
And drinks the flood within the cloud;
Screams with his deepest, wildest mirth
As he beholds the lightning's birth;
And proudly rears his mighty form
Beside the spirit of the storm;
Delighted mounts his roaring car
Where lightnings flash and thunders jar.

PART IV.

I.

A tower of stupendous size
The hero through the tempest eyes,
From its broad door-way came a light
That fiercely cleft the inky night,
Sent its long shaft of lustre forth
Like flaming streamer of the North;
And o'er battlement and tower
Cast its majesty and power—
Like conqueror sits on its throne
And guilds the night with blazing zone.
To this broad door-way strode the knight,
A spacious hall there met his sight,
The hero o'er the threshold strode
And entered swift the strange abode.

A gaud and splendor filled the place
From wall to wall through all its space,
A thousand times more grand and fair
Than seen in all those towers there
Through which that knight 'till then had past,
Though arrayed were some in splendor vast;
Scarce his wondering eyes behold
The gaudy splendors round him roll'd,
That dazzling flash before his gaze
Filling him with surprise, amaze;
When hark! he hears a gentle sound,
And soothing music floats around.
From room to room the music trilled,
With melody the region filled,
With harmony the walls around
And ceilings echo back the sound;
Through lofty arch and nave and dome
The flooding strains of music roam
'Till together all the blending notes
In one grand diapason floats.
While through the hero's sense they roll
And lull from toil his hardy soul,
He sees approaching from a hall
Swift through a door-way wide and tall
A maid form'd divine, of angel face,
By nature crown'd with every grace
Eyes dark as nature saw 'till now
Flashed bright beneath their arching brow;
Her sable tresses loosely flow
Down o'er a bosom white as snow;
Her arms were bare, her shoulders too,
For all the fanning winds to woo;

Her ankles bare, revealed to sight
A skin as northern snow drifts white,
Her milk-hued feet no sandals wore,
And light as air they touched the floor.
A huntress seem'd the lovely maid,
Or some bright nymph of wold or glade;
A quiver her fair shoulders bore
Which held of arrows goodly store,
A polished bow of wondrous length,
Of twisted wood and matchless strength,
As lightly held she in her grasp
Though did she but a feather clasp;
Though but a maid of fragile form
She'd strength and fleetness of the storm.
Her nature was as void of fear
As any oak the mountains rear;
Her soul as generous and bold
As any cased in human mould;
Yet had she just as fix'd a will
As e'er swayed man for good or ill.
Griselda was the name she bore,
And was daughter of King Tellemore.
Swift towards the knight came on the maid
Sweet as a sunbeam through a glade;
Close to the knight the maiden drew
Where he could all her beauty view,
And with a voice as soft and sweet
As yet did ear of mortal greet,
She thus King Arthur's knight did meet:

II.

Welcome to these halls, gallant knight,
Thou soul of courage, arm of might;

The whole wide earth resounds thy name,
Thou hero of immortal fame;
Champion of the weak and lone
Thy succor kind have thousands known;
Thou art the frail ones' sword and shield
In halls of joy or battle-field;
Vainly no mortal sought thine aid
By day nor night, no man nor maid.
To-night there is a mighty deed
That thou must do, perform with speed.
This is the night foretold of yore
By Merlin's craft and Merlin's lore,
A valiant knight of Arthur's train,
Whom Merlin christened Beau de Main,
Should slay the dragon of the glen
And bring the treasure from his den,
Though that vast hoard of treasure bright
Has there been hid from human sight—
Through all their joys, their hopes and fears
For just two thousand fleeting years;
And it is prophesied of yore
That when this dragon's life is o'er,
All wizard's charms shall be destroyed,
And all their force made null and void
Round the towers of Arteloise;
Still'd ever as the serpent's noise
The stalwart plowman treads to death
That no more coils or breathes a breath.
When this is done Clotilda's sleep
Shall waken from its slumbers deep.
At early dawn, ere any star
Has paled before Aurora's car,

That dragon shall be slain by thee,
Clotilda rise, of slumber free,
And we gain all the mighty hoard
That's in the dragon's cavern stored.
So come with me, thou valiant knight;
Through storm and gloom I'll guide thee right;
Yea, lead thee on the safest path
So thou mayst quell the dragon's wrath.

III.

Forth from those wide and lofty halls
Where light on blazing splendor falls,
And music with its sweetest notes
In ceaseless diapason floats,
The hero and his lovely guide
Through storms descend a mountain side,
Where flooding rains to torrents flow
And roar throughout the vale below.
Right at the lofty mountain's base
Within a dark and lonesome place,
Stood still that hero and his guide;
Soon on the mountain's shaggy side
Within a cavern gaping wide,
A horrid light the twain espied;
And in that cavern vast and dread
Was seen a grisly dragon spread,
From his huge mouth a roaring came
And horrid blasts of smoke and flame;
His awful fangs were red with gore
And blood was dashed his body o'er.
Huge was the beast in breadth and length
And seem'd of more than mortal strength,
A huger form and vaster limb,
A beast more horrible and grim—

With fiercer look and feller jaws
And stronger thews and longer claws,
And eye-balls of more hellish glow
That did dread lightnings from them throw,
Through all his sights on hill and glen
That hero ne'er had seen 'till then.
Limbs had the monster, dread and long,
And arm'd with weapons grim and strong.
'Twas said the monster drew his birth
From fiend of hell and ghoul of earth,
Whose souls were full of evil deeds
As is a tropic moor with weeds;
Monsters were both, terrific, grim,
Of all infernal form and limb,
That dwelt upon a slimy lair
'Midst caves of intramundane air.
From these this horrid dragon sprung,
And while the beast immense was young
A Titan brought him to this glen
To guard the treasure of his den;
To guard the hoard through weal or woe
'Till time two thousand years should sow
Nor let 'till then the eye of man
The boundless pile of treasure scan,
And not 'till one of mortal breath
Had stretched it still in grisly death;
One sprung from man and woman's seed
In time to come should do the deed,
And only he should win the hoard,
Yes, only he, that there is stored.

IV.

While there the knight the monster eyed
And viewed the reeking cavern wide,

And saw the task that fate had willed
Should by his prowess be fulfilled,
Secret to Him his thoughts he raised
Who all his life he'd loved and praised.
O Lord, divine, make me to-night
The victor in this coming fight;
Let me yon grisly monster slay
And crush on earth all wizard's sway.
Thus secret prayed King Arthur's knight
And rushed to meet the beast in fight.

V.

Roused by the good knight's stalwart tread
On rocks that round that cavern spread,
And sounds that from his armor rang,
From off his lair the dragon sprang;
High up his horrid head he rears
And prieks aloft his shaggy ears,
For full before his eye-ball's sight
He sees King Arthur's armed knight,
And with a roar of horrid sound
That even shook the hills around,
Full on the knight the dragon came
Forth belching dread his founts of flame.
But ne'er that knight had met before
Through all his thousand frays of yore,
A foe with form so grim and long,
And limbs so terrible and strong;
Nor force of such terrific ire,
Nor breath of such consuming fire.
High up his seven-fold shield he bore
The dragon's flaming mouth before;
While there the spacious targe he held
And from his form the flame repell'd,

Down on the dragon's head he brought
His flaming sword more swift than thought,
Swift as electric currents speed
The hero's broadsword did the deed.
A horrid wound the weapon made,
The dragon's ear wide open laid,
And fast from it the reeking blood
Poured to the earth a dark red flood;
Roused by the wound to fiercer wrath,
And swift as light darts on its path,
The dragon reared its mighty paws
And on the knight descends its claws;
His seven-fold shield receives the blow
And weight enormous of the foe.
High o'er the knight the monster rear'd
Its horrid head with eyes that glared
A light as awful and as dread
As yet a beast or demon shed;
And fast his claws upon the knight
Descending show their ponderous might;
Fast, hard they on the hero light
And 'gainst him wage terrific fight;
While thus in dreadful close they strove,
The knight his targe impetuous drove
Against the dragon's brawny breast
Whose hide with horny scales was drest;
And deep in it to floods of gore
The shining boss its passage tore,
Through steely scales and horny hide—
Bones, thews, that mortal steel defied,
It tore its passage deep and wide.
Then high up the horrid beast he held,
And thus from him its mouth repell'd,

From whence grim flame eternal sailed;
And while the beast was thus impaled,
All o'er its form and grisly throat
The good knight's sword terrific smote.
Though here and there right oft his blade
Dread wounds o'er all the monster made,
Yet still it seem'd that dragon grim
More stronger wax'd in form and limb,
While seem'd weaker grew the gallant knight
Before that fierce, unequal fight—
That monster's superhuman might.

VI.

From side to side, around, around,
Through all that cavern's ample bound
The knight and beast with growing rage
Their all unearthly combat wage.
They part and breathe, then meet apace,
And battle dread through all the place;
His sword the good knight wields amain,
Blows on the beast eternal rain.
The cave through all its vast domain
Is redden'd with a gory stain;
O'er all the floor and walls around
The dragon's wasted gore is found;
From him it flows in torrents large
And stains the hero's mail and targe.
Sudden as ever flash of light
Sped from the tempest cloud at night,
The dragon from the hero flew
'Till wide the space between them grew;
Where lay huge rocks he hastened hence
And in his paws with force immense

High o'er his head those rocks he twirled
And them full on the hero hurled;
And as he caught them on his shield
The blows like distant thunders peal'd.
And as the rocks the monster threw
More dread his founts of fire grew,
From out his horrid mouth they flew
Horrid and vast as ever flame
From out a roaring furnace came,
And full upon the gallant knight
They rush with all their heat and might.
Forth from the cave the hero flew
While at his heels the dragon drew;
Soon on the mountain's craggy side
A fallen tree the knight espied,
All void of limbs and huge and long,
Well pointed, dried and tough and strong.
This in his hands the hero caught
And it right o'er the dragon brought;
Right to its mouth of roaring flame
The keen, sharp-pointed timber came,
Then down that gulf of flame with force
Immense that timber took its course.
Down mouth and throat the good knight drove
The mighty spear, while grimly strove
That grim, infernal monster there
To break free of the mighty spear;
Which ever way he turn'd or strove
The spear the knight still deeper drove,
Still held the monster on his lair
And saw his eye-balls fiercer glare;
With growing pain and fell despair
Their sheen illumes the sable air;

A horrid light on darkness throws
Which unto all grim hues bestows.

VII.

I'll dim those eye-balls' savage glow
And aid thee quell thy grisly foe,
For ne'er did fate on man bestow
A fiercer one to overthrow.
Thus to the knight Griselda spake,
And straight she did an arrow take,
Swift as a flash she bent her bow
And in an eye-ball's horrid glow
Her hissing shaft its entrance made,
Did grim its source of light invade.
Out gushed in streams the riven orb
And earth did swift its light absorb.
Again her twanging bow she bent
In other orb a shaft she sent,
Deep to the source of light it went
And ghastly was its structure rent;
Out oozed amain the flowing light,
Streamed on the earth to sable night;
All trace of light those shafts destroyed,
Left in each place a darksome void;
But still grim founts of roaring flame
It seem'd no mortal force could tame
From huge jaws of the monster came
And seem'd to stronger wax his frame;
Dread and more dread boiled forth his rage,
And grimmer did the knight engage,
Still hotter did the battle wage,
In strife more dreadful grew and sage.
Round the wide cave it turns or flies,
Then sudden back to battle hies,

Yet still the knight pursued its path
With equal strength and equal wrath;
At bay his horrid foe he held
And from him all its blows repell'd;
Deep that tough hide of horny scales
Incessant his good sword assails.
At length by fate decreed he found
A vital spot for him to wound;
There swift with his good sword he smote,
Cut grim and wide the dragon's throat;
Again, again his good sword sped
'Till it lopped off the monster's head,
Then gushed o'er all that cavern's floor
A torrent grim of reeking gore,
Yet from the monster roared a sound
Like ocean's wrath on rocky ground.
Forth from the cave the hero sped
And bore along the dragon's head,
Fierce twirled it by its tawny hair
Then cast it forth on yielding air,
In a deep vale of rocky ground
It roaring fell with horrid sound;
From rock to rock the sightless head
Whose orbs had late such horror shed,
O'er giddy heights down mountains sped
With sounds infernal, grim and dread.

VIII.

Again, again Griselda's bow
Did arrow in the carcass throw;
Soon the headless, quivering trunk
Though deep in its own lifeblood sunk,
Bristled with spears like harvest plain
Where late the reapers garnered grain.

Yet still Griselda's bow did twang,
Through air her hissing arrows rang,
Until within the monster's heart
With force terrific sped a dart;
Then with a groan of grim despair
That shook the hills and startled air,
The monster yields his flaming breath
To silence, darkness and to death.
But least in it should be some life
And it should rise again to strife,
The knight drives deep his sword amain
And cut the carcass all in twain.
Piece-meal from the cave he drags its form
And casts it to the night and storm,
Hurls it far down the mountain side
Where once it stalked in lordly pride,
With horrid fangs and scaly hide
And all the might of man defied;
And for two thousand weary years
Without one throe of mortal fears,
Had guarded safe enormous hoard
That was within that cavern stored,
By Titan kings piled there of old,
By wizards and by giants bold,
Who for it ravaged, scourged the world,
And here in heaps their booty hurl'd.
Yes, here enormous plunder piled
Vast as o'er which has mortal smiled,
Since first the love of gold began
To hold its sway in breast of man;
And here it lay, so fate decreed,
Until a knight of daring deed—

Whose soul was free of sin and crime
And every evil known to time,
Should by his strength and prowess slay
The beast that watched it night and day;
But filled must be his soul with seeds
That only grow immortal deeds,
Who shall the mighty beast o'erthrow,
And to that hoard of treasure go.

IX.

The task was done, the beast was slain,
His lifeblood did the cavern stain,
And all around o'er hill and plain
Did universal darkness reign.
And still the rain in steady pour
Fell down 'midst storm's incessant roar;
At times was heard a hooting owl,
And distant fox and mastiff's howl;
While near that deep and darksome cave
Stood still the maid and hero brave,
When lo, they heard a mystic noise
And flashed strange lights round Arteloise;
The hills beneath them seemed to quake,
And seem'd strange voices from them spake,
Louder than e'er volcano spoke
The blending voices round them broke;
And all confused the accents rung,
But what was said was in the tongue
And language of some unknown land,
Nor knight nor maid could understand.
The voices still'd, a moment's calm
Hung over all like holy balm;
Then sudden from the mountain's side
And all the valley far and wide,

Shot up unnumbered lights of blue
And every known and fancied hue.
Straight all things round began to change
And into other forms arrange;
Where gloomy fens and jungles stood,
And rocks o'ergrown with knotted wood,
Like magic past away from sight
And left a landscape pleasing, bright;
Each dread wizard's power and spell
That fiends had brought to earth from hell,
That long had ruled those hills and dell—
Down, down with jars terrific fell,
Was straight to utter ruin hurl'd
And banished from the startled world;
The storm that instant past away
And peace once more assumed its sway.
The stars pour down their steadfast ray,
While over all the moonbeams play,
From zenith to the earth below
Her all unclouded glories flow;
And over all that earth can show
Her flooding lights of splendor glow.
The hills, the vale and rippling stream
With dazzling light beneath her gleam;
Breathes o'er the land a balmy breeze
Which gently stirs the heads of trees,
And o'er their rain-wet, moving leaves
Her light a robe of silver weaves;
Violets breathe from their moon-lit lair,
And with sweet odors load the air,
Roses and shrubs and lilies pale,
And all flowers of hill or dale,

Of mountain, plain, or wold, or vale,
With fragrance there the air assail;
And over all a glory fell
That whispered like a passing knell,
Which atom seem'd to atom tell
Now man had burst the wizard's spell,
Their force did seed of woman quell,
So joyed was earth and grieved was hell.

X.

Charmed with this sylvan scene around
That pleased at every sight and sound,
Griselda and the daring knight
With rapture viewed the landscape bright.
A crystal stream with pearly glow
That run o'er pebbles white as snow,
Did close beside them babbling flow
And murmured on to vales below,
Where shrubs and flowers formed an arch
Above the waters' rapid march.
To this the maid and hero hied,
Soon stood the crystal stream beside;
Here doffed the knight his gleaming helm
And filled it from the watery realm;
Unto the maid the cask he gave,
Long drank she of the sparkling wave;
Then where her lips the helm had graced
Unto that spot his own he placed,
And from the crystal wave he quaffed
His fill of the refreshing draft.
Full on his face the moonbeams glow'd,
His features to the maiden show'd,
His manly visage fair to see
Of all save nobleness was free;

His was the form and his the face
Where maid was sure her love to place,
And feel the while her love, hope, trust,
And all things prized by mortal dust,
Were laid upon as pure a shrine
Of virtue and of faith divine,
As ever since the world began
Fond, trusting woman found in man.
And pure and true in soul was he
As can on earth we mortals be,
And just as pure and good was she
As those that are of evil free,
Or nature ever saw 'till now.
And while the night breeze fanned his brow
Into the face before her raised
With fix'd and searching stare she gazed:
Watch'd the eyes beam her own above
Which seem'd return'd an equal love;
And while they gazed, it seem'd each soul
Did through the other's being roll,
Mutual love through either heart
Did with the force of lightning dart;
But neither did by words confess
What each the while could rightly guess,
And eye to eye more plain confest
Than words the feelings of each breast.
For her that hero felt his love
Sweep all his other thoughts above,
She in his soul triumphant rose
With force that could no thought oppose;
Her image filled his spirit's sphere
'Till nothing else seem'd harbored there;

Love did through all his senses roll,
And flood and overwhelm his soul.

XI.

Sudden and swift he turned his gaze
From eyes that on him true love blaze;
That beam like those in angel land
And well his feelings understand,
And towards a mound he led the maid
Where flowers all the soil invade;
There from that fair and lofty ground
He viewed the silent hills around.
As if the stillness there to break,
Thus to the maid the hero spake:

XII.

Behold! how sweet the moonbeams glow
Where yonder linn its waters throw,
They make as grand and bright a show
As there did molten silver flow.
Those waters rush o'er beds of stone
Arrayed with lustre not their own;
For were the moon to give no light
Those waters would be dark as night,
And so it is with beings here
Whom fate has placed upon this sphere,
If not for some kind, genial soul,
In whom doth kindred feeling roll,
That sheds from each to each its ray
Of faith and love by night and day,
How dark through life would be the way,
And sadness would all nature sway.
But I must keep my thoughts above
All feelings such as earthly love,

Nor let it e'er my spirit melt;
A maiden's kiss I never felt;
In mine her hand was never placed,
By me was never maid embraced
Through all my life on earth 'till now,
And never will by me, I trow.
O'er love my heart must aye prevail,
My soul sheathed sure in virtue's mail
Shall vanquish sin and love's assail,
For I must earn the sacred Grail.
I cleave the helms of giants grim,
And piece-meal hew them form and limb;
With stalwart arm and spirit bold
I slaughter beasts of fen and wold,
Huge hydras dread and dragons grim
That roam the earth, or waters swim,
That have on earth for countless years
The souls of mortals fill'd with fears,
Annoyed the earth and stored the air
With pestilence and fell despair.
The swords of foes I do not feel,
They shiver broken on my steel,
Nor spear, nor lance my mail can pierce
However strong the foe; and fierce;
But when I strike, or thrust, my sword
Cleaves targe, however deep and broad;
I carve my foeman's helm and mail,
And vanquish all that I assail;
Where e'er I strike my blow is sure
Because my soul of sin is pure;
My strength is as a thousand men
Because I only virtue ken.

I ride into the clanging lists,
No giant there my force resists,
My spear is tough, its strength is sure,
And shall all weight and shock endure;
Before me horse and riders reel,
It pierces true their hardest steel,
Of conquest I am ever sure
Because my soul of sin is pure.
My soul must aye of sin be free
For I the sacred Grail shall see;
It must o'er love and sin prevail
For I shall win the holy Grail.
And over moor and dale and hill
Through strife, and storm and every ill,
I quest for it with sacred will
'Till I my holy task fulfil;
Me mighty yearnings move and thrill,
Keep hope and faith before me still,
And silver voices fill mine ear:
Press on, good knight, the goal is near,
One effort more, thou shalt prevail,
And win for aye the sacred Grail!
Right oft I roam through mountain halls
To which it seems some spirit calls,
I tread the place, I near the shrine,
And see the lights around it shine;
A holy music fills my ears,
But to my sense nought else appears;
I watch the shrine 'till day's decline
And night creeps o'er the dark'ning halls,
When lo, a light all ruddy bright
O'er all in sacred splendor falls;

Still, still I gaze 'till morning rays
Light up again the mountain halls,
A mystic shrine with sounds divine,
Nought else to me my vision calls.
O'er mountain lake my way I take
Within a bark as light as air,
My sails the breeze wafts o'er those seas
Unto a secret island fair;
I tread its sands, before me stands
A shrine with tapers burning there,
I look around but nought is found,
The shrine of sacred Grail is bare;
But awed profound, I hear the sound
Of whispered, never-ending prayer,
But whence it springs, from whence it rings
My spirit can't conjecture where.
By day and night in armor bright,
With ready sword and spear in rest,
Through shine and storm I urge my form,
And for the sacred Grail I quest;
And while I ride o'er kingdoms wide,
Search palace, cot, tower and hall,
Grim dragon's cave, or hero's grave,
Or where so e'er my shadow fall.
Strange sights and new I ever view,
And of alternate woe and weal,
Which often bring in listed ring
The champions clothed in clanging steel;
With mace of might and axe as bright
As icicle 'neath moonlight seen,
The tough, strong spear that keepeth clear
Wide space the charging knights between

The gleaming sword with surface broad
Which ever to its task is true,
That swift alights, the helmet smites,
And it and breast-plate journeys through
And oft a maid with charm arrayed
Sweet as the rose at early morn,
This single arm has brought from harm
And saved from lasting shame and scorn.
And if I ride the nations wide
And never find the sacred Grail,
Yet, deeds of good, my knightlihood,
Shall recompense me if I fail.
Apast my lips no nectar slips
Save what gushes from the crystal rill,
The sparkling wine for those must shine
Who courteth human pain and ill.
Through shine and hail o'er hill and dale
With toil that seeketh none of rest,
I'll search each place and secret space,
And for the sacred Grail I'll quest.

XIII.

And for it too, the maid replied,
I'll with you search the nations wide,
For it through storm and shine I'll ride,
And nought shall bring me from your side.
My soul of sin is chaste and pure,
In virtue's mail 'tis sheathed secure,
His lips on mine ne'er man did place,
And never felt I knight's embrace.
Ne'er hero pressed this hand of mine,
My thoughts are void of sin as thine,
And for the sacred Grail I'll quest
With equal care and equal zest.

I seek no wealth but ruddy health,
And spirit unalloyed with sin,
With you I go through weal or woe
'Till I with you the Grail shall win.
Through stately halls 'midst mountain walls,
Piled there by knightly kings of old,
By night and day I've ta'en my way,
Searched secret shrine and magic hold.
No matter where my feet career
To hidden mosque or secret shrine,
The shrine was bare, no Grail was there,
But glowing round did tapers shine;
While all around did whispers sound
Like voices of ascending prayer,
Or mists at morn when light is born
And vapors rise in sunlit air.
No pause nor stay, I've ta'en my way,
And quested for the sacred Grail
O'er lonely lands and burning sands,
To tread might any mortal quail;
And though no sound nor sight I found
That might me on my pathway cheer,
Yet faith and hope still bade me cope
'Gainst disappointment, toil and care;
And meet with scorn all feeling born
From doubt, or sloth, or dark despair,
Turn from aside with lordly pride
Those who mocked at my questing there.
Through mountain mists 'midst tourney lists
Where charging, clashing squadrons reel,
Where armors clang, and trumpets twang
Their mad'ning strains to heroes' peal;

Where morions bright the swords invite,
That sunder wide the tempered steel,
Where death careers, and splintered spears
Their flying shafts in air reveal.
Where mace of might and axes bright
Tremendous wreck and ruin deal,
Such sights and sounds mine eyes have found
While questing for the holy Grail;
Yet still I quest and may not rest
For it I'll find, I shall not fail.
Once on my quest, with toil oppressed,
And burden of the dreary day,
Beside a shrine did I recline
Where tapers burn'd with steadfast ray;
Without did howling tempest blow,
And cover'd o'er the hills with snow;
Lull'd by the sighing of the storm
In slumber sank my weary form,
And while I slept, I dream'd I saw
A scene that fill'd my soul with awe;
Methought I sailed a mountain mere,
That was as crystal, bright and clear,
So pure that I could look below
And see its rock floor white as snow;
Down deep upon its polished bed
Methought I saw bright fairies tread,
They danced around in perfect mirth
And seem'd of joy to have no dearth;
And while they danced I heard them sing
A song that made the waters ring,
With harmony profound,
The song they sang did wider fling
Its more than mortal sound;

'Till from the flood a mighty storm
It swelling o'er the mountain falls,
Until it shook the lofty form
Of all the mountain's granite walls;
Where steep and vast those mountains rose
With summits crowned with fleecy snows,
And where the clouds above them formed
An awful arch where lightnings stormed,
And shot their flashing bolts around
'Midst floods of flame and worlds of sound.
And while the noises thundered there,
And fill'd that arching cloudland's sphere,
Right through the flakes of falling snow
There shot a shaft of silver glow,
From clouds it reached to earth below
And formed a bridge all glowing bright;
It made a span of dazzling light
From clouds unto the crystal mere,
Shot through the rippling waters there,
And full with flooding sheen it falls
Upon the fairies' wonderous halls;
Swift up the shaft of glowing light
I saw the fairies take their flight,
And as they lightly sped along
Incessant poured their tide of song.
The language was some Runic rhyme,
Or of some race of olden time,
That lived within some unknown land;
And I no word could understand;
But with bewitching music rung
The harmony those fairies sung,
And organ notes roll deep between
The rhymes, as preludes intervene.

Moved foremost of the fairy throng
One o'er the rest more tall and strong,
And did diviner form disclose;
Fair was her face as is the rose
Where red and white divinely glow,
Their blending shades together throw,
Commingling pour their living hues
And glitter with their morning dews.
Her golden tresses loosely stream'd
O'er her, and all radiant gleam'd
As doth the waste of frozen snow
When full on it the moonbeams glow,
And makes its polished surface show
A gleamy sheen that seems to flow,
And move in ripples flashing bright,
And pours around redundant light.
Her lily hands were clean and fair
As virgin snow just born in air,
Nor yet of earth has caught a sight,
Nor knows of taint from mount nor moor
And in her hands a vessel bright
She up her shining pathway bore,
A vessel bright, I knew it well,
Though never it I'd seen before,
A brighter lustre round it fell
As it did higher, higher soar.
O, glorious sight, the sacred Grail
I saw brought from that mountain flood,
Up paths of light with fairies sail,
Fill'd with the Saviour's holy blood.
I heard a peal of thunder, loud
As ever jarred on mortal ears,

And looking up unto the cloud
That hid all the heavenly spheres,
I saw upon that bridge of light
Descending swift as flying hail,
A throng of angels stoled in white
Who seized and bore away the sacred Grail.
I heard the flapping of their wings
As up the path of light they flew,
And while they sped, each angel sings
A song that all triumphant rings,
And far and wide a music flings
That only ears of heaven knew.
Straight the clouds above were riven
And light redundant filled the space,
A flaming shaft of light was driven
Like magic from the earth to heaven,
And did the boundless void embrace.
Up this with speed the angels throng
On flapping, snowy pinions sail,
And bear away 'midst blissful song
The blood of God, the sacred Grail.
I watched the glory pass away
'Till it was lost in dazzling ray,
To which it ever seem'd to soar
'Till I could see and hear no more.
Oh, how I longed to burst the thrall
Of mortal bondage, leap the wall
And free me from this earthly hall,
As neighing charger breaks from stall
And darts along the grassy plains,
And evermore the bit disdains.
Light after light, ray after ray,
I saw the glory fade away,

And pass back to the noon-day sun,
And seem'd at once the place grew dum,
And woke I with a stiffen'd form,
Still fell the snow, still roared the storm.
The lights around the altar burn'd
Bright as when them I first discerned,
And o'er it lay its snowy cloth,
Untouched by time, or wasting moth,
Its silver vessels glittered there,
And by them opened books of prayer,
And aye I heard sweet voices ring,
Yet could I see no living thing.

XIV.

O'er mountain wilds, through snow and hail
For years I've sought the sacred Grail,
Through vast cathedrals I have trod,
All places mortals worship God;
Through chapel, temple and through fane,
Yet has my search been all in vain.
Searched caves in forests, glen and fell,
Where hoary Druids secret dwell,
And ever chant their mournful tunes,
Their hymns and psalms in mystic runes.
Where e'er I tread I feel no dread
Of aught I meet nor see nor hear,
I dread no storm nor breathing form,
'Tis only sin I need to fear;
Through good or ill my spirit still
Shall keep itself serene and pure,
Virtue with me must ever be
Strong as eternity and sure.
A maiden knight am I, I roam
Where e'er on earth I list to go,

The whole wide earth to me is home,
My friends: my quiver and my bow.

Oft on my gallant steed I ride,
Scour the country far and wide.

All clad like knight in gleaming mail,
I wear a helm, I bear a shield,

The spear I lift, the sword I wield,
Although my hand seems small and frail;

And ne'er to foeman did I yield,
Nor at grim danger quake nor quail;

I meet my foemen on the field—

All who would me with wrong assail,
I pierce their steel, my blows they feel,
To earth doth steeds and riders reel,

And I o'er all their might prevail.
Such have I done and still shall do,
Until I find the blessed clue

That leads me to the sacred Grail.
Oft in my dreams a glory gleams

That floods on high the viewless air,
And mighty forms like clouds in storms

Although no sable hues they wear—
Fill up all space and hide the face

Of skies that late were beaming clear.
And angels bright, whose robes are white

As foam round ocean's stormy wraith,
Come round me there and hover near,

Pure angels of immortal faith;
And of eternal hope and love,

Pure beings of immortal joy,
Who hover round the throne above,

Whose souls no sins shall e'er annoy.

Pure spirits of eternal peace,
Whose downy pinions cleave the air,
Whom I shall join when I shall cease
My questing on this planet here.
And while I long to burst the chains
That binds my soul in mortal thrall,
I hear distinct the blissful strains
Of song and music rise and fall.
I see them rise and soar to skies,
And into dazzling brightness sail,
Soar into beams where glory gleams
And bear with them the sacred Grail.

XV.

She ceased, for from the heights aloft
There came a music sweet and soft,
That louder came and still more near,
And filled with tones the moonlit air;
And countless voices hover round,
And load the place with song and sound,
This song of all did loudest swell,
And sent its words o'er hill and dell:

SONG:

Gloomy as midnight clouds above
The mountain's craggy crest,
Are those who never felt of love
One feeling light their breast;
Who ever keep themselves aloof
From friendship's smiles and tears,
Whose souls are sheathed in armor proof
To all its hopes and fears.
Who sail across the sea of life,
Feel no joy that grief beguiles,

Nor feel the bliss with rapture rife
Found in its fairy isles;
Whose lips through all their mortal thrall
Kiss only empty air,
And never touch the mouth at all
Of loving being here.
Who plod through life their weary day,
And breathe for self alone,
And dying pass from earth away
Forsaken and unknown;
Their life on earth has been a blank,
An empty, dreary space,
The stream is dried along the bank,
No waters bless the place.
The talents nature gave to them
Have faded ere their bloom,
The whole is withered branch and stem,
And death the roots assume.
They reap no harvest from their toil,
Blight seizes every ear,
And over all their dreary soil
Doth moulding night appear;
But those who hand in hand move down
The mystic vale of life,
Though sorrows darkly round them frown
They still with bliss are rife.
Their days are ever flowing full
Of joys that vanquish pain,
Together on through life they pull
As nature did ordain;
Their stream is ever flowing clear
How e'er the storms may fly,

Nor droughts however long and drear
Can ever wholly dry.
They kiss no empty air, but press
The lips with passions warm,
No empty shadows they caress,
They clasp the human form;
They feel it nestle to their side
In loving, close embrace,
Nor they of it would be denied
For aught on nature's face.
Their arms are just as strong in fight,
Their spears are just as sure
As those who ne'er felt love's delight,
And feeling deep and pure;
They bend as strong and tough a bow,
Their arrows fly as true
As those who never felt love's throe,
Nor yet his raptures knew.
Their swords the gleaming helmets carve,
And hew as deep through mail
As who of love their natures starve,
And o'er its sweets prevail;
Yes, hand in hand, they move along
In everlasting gleam,
All joys of earth to them belong
With which does nature teem.

XVI.

Here ceased the song, but ere had died
Its echoes o'er the valleys wide,
A lay of deeper, stronger tone
Was over all the valleys thrown;
But what spot, or place around
Burst forth that song and music's sound,

The knight and maiden could not tell,
 Nor guess the least from whence they swell.
 It seemed the earth as well as air
 Had voices singing everywhere,
 All space was full of music's sound,
 It breathed from all the earth around,
 And seem'd that every tree that stood
 Alone, or in the waving wood,
 The oak, the gum, the poplar strong,
 Were music breathing forth with song,
 And with a wild and mystic trill
 This lay was sung o'er glen and hill:

SONG:

Happy are they who void of sin
 Walk pure and chaste before their God,
 For they a priceless crown shall win
 When they through nature's realm have trod;
 Happy are they who through this life
 No fleeting joys of earth have known,
 Who 'gainst the tempter waged their strife
 'Till all his wiles were overthrown.
 Happy are they who never knew
 One pang nor thrill of mortal love,
 For they shall all the glories view
 And feel within the realms above;
 Happy are they who never pressed
 The lips of mortals to their own,
 Who ne'er were fondled and caressed
 By those of mortal flesh and bone.
 Happy are they whose chastened lips
 Touch and kiss empty air alone,
 Their mouth alone the nectar sips
 That flows from the eternal throne;

Happy are they whose hearts are pure
And ne'er did mortal passions feel,
Who sheathed in virtue's mail secure
Are ever unto heaven leal.
They stand in everlasting light,
A glory ever round them beams,
The angels watch their sleep by night,
With happy visions fill their dreams;
Happy are they who bold in faith
Have waited, watched and trusted long,
Their robes shall be white as the wraith
Whenseas are stirred by tempests strong.
Happy are they who love but God,
And have save Him no other fear,
By them the sacred path is trod
That brings them to their Maker near;
Happy are they who through this life
Forever walk and dwell alone,
Who quell their natures, passions rife
That riot in their flesh and bone;
Who over vanquished lust and will
Rear firm their everlasting throne;
Who over every mortal ill
Sustain a triumph all their own;
Who quell all tumults of their soul,
All anarchy of hopes and fears,
Nor ever waver in control
Through all their span of mortal years;
Their spear shall still be tough and strong
And pierce all gleaming armor sure;
Their trusty sword carve bucklers broad
And helms of tempered metals pure;

In listed rings o'er knights and kings
They ever shall triumphant ride,
Safe and secure they shall endure
What e'er the odds, what e'er betide.
Happy they who thrice all ills endure,
Suffer woe and pain through all their lives,
And still of every sin are pure
Though fierce 'gainst them the tempter strives,
By fate it is to them decreed
To vanquish; over all prevail;
Before their steel all foes shall reel,
And they shall find the sacred Grail.

XVII.

The voices died; but still the sound
Of music fill'd the air around,
Weird and strange at times its trill
Re-echoed over glen and hill;
Where height and valley, rock and stream
Glowed bright unto the moon's broad beam,
Where forests waved their stately heads
In glory 'neath the light she sheds;
Whose dewy leaves a splendor show
When e'er the sighing breezes blow,
And them in gentle motion throw
As molten silver there did flow.
Where tracks of distant torrents gleam
With dazzling light beneath her beam,
As ceaseless down the mountain side
They rush unto the valley wide,
And dashing on the rocks below,
In air their misty vapors throw;
And white along the valleys sail
Look like some virgin's bridal veil,

The moon like some vast pharos' blaze
Looks on the earth with steadfast gaze;
While stars that round her faintly beam,
Like ships upon an ocean seem,
When all becalm'd their silent sails
Hang deathlike, waiting rising gales.
The violets and lily's bed
Still on the air sweet odors shed,
The rose hung on its tender stem
And in sweet fragrance vied with them;
Flowers of garden and of dale
There breathed their odors o'er the vale.
And everywhere the eye could trace
O'er all that strange and lovely place,
In every stir and sight and sound
That was above, below, around,
There lurked a splendor vast, intense,
That charmed all mortal soul and sense.
Swift as the speed of fleeting breath
That sudden leaves us thrall'd in death,
A column vast of blazing sheen
Flashed up the earth and sky between;
And where the mountain tallest stood
With gleaming rocks, all bare of wood,
That column vast of brightness pure
Stood blazing on foundation sure;
And all that mountain's mighty crest
With dazzling rings huge flames invest;
Strange forms and figures mov'd around,
But all with them is void of sound;
And seem'd no noise amongst them stirr'd,
Not e'en a lowly whispered word.

From place to place they glide or come,
But with them noise is dead or dumb
'Till shot a shaft of gleaming sheen
Across the vale, the heights between,
A mighty bridge of glowing light,
It spann'd the vale from height to height;
And right where stood the knight and maid
The bridge's glowing end was laid,
Then from the sky and nature's form
A rolling, shaking, swelling storm
Of harmony rose on the air
That fill'd all space and everywhere;
And swift across the bridge of light
Where stood the maiden and the knight,
There past a throng of angels bright
On downy wings all clothed in white;
A kindly smile the foremost wore
As ever yet an angel bore;
And thus with gentle words she spake,
Whose tones did sweetest music make:
Thou maid of Christ, thou knight of God
The journey to thy goal is trod,
Thy quest by day and night is done,
The prize, the sacred Grail is won!
Then in the hands of knight and maid
A chalice bright that angel laid.
Swift, sudden as the flash of light
Darting from the cloud at night,
The angel throng straight disappear
As though they melted into air;
The gleaming pageant past away
'Till hidden in redundant ray;

'Till lost beyond the walls of space,
And mortal eye no more could trace;
With peace to earth, good-will to men
The music died on hill and glen.
And side by side in silent prayer
Kneel'd down the knight and maiden there.
With spirits void of lust and sin—
Where rest could nought but virtue win,
They breathed to God their thankful prayers,
The prize was won, the sacred Grail was theirs.

PART V.

I.

Above the gray horizon's rim
The coming lights of morning swim,
Shaft after shaft, spear after spear,
The feeble lines of light appear;
And floating through the realms of space
Spread over all creation's face;
From sight the paling stars are drawn
And hide before the coming dawn.
Wave after wave the sprays of light
By swift degrees become more bright,
'Till rosy streaks the skies adorn
And don the ruddy hues of morn;
'Till night of all its gloom is shorn
And day upon its lap is born.
The sun beams from his glowing halls,
And over glen and mountain walls

His flood of sheen redundant falls,
And earth from darkness disenthalls.
The rocky peaks and mountain stream
With renovated glory gleam;
The forests wave their heads and teem
With life increased beneath his beam;
O'er violets the dew drops shine
And sparkle with a sheen divine.
The grass and moss and flowers bright,
Moist with refreshing dews of night
Rejoicing don his beams of light,
Display an all enchanting sight.
Emit from all their heads and stems
The gleaming of ten thousand gems,
Of every varied hue and shade
Yet fancy drew or nature made;
Where down the heights abrupt and tall
The roaring floods of torrents fall.
And swingeing by the boulders vast
That all along their bed are cast,
Around the waters madly swirl,
And high o'er them their snow wreaths hurl;
Then crested o'er with flying froth
White as the snow fields of the North,
They gather down the mountain's side
To dread abysses yawning wide;
There plunge on rocks in headlong flow
That churn them into foam below,
Their spray in misty vapors rise
Till cloudlike o'er the hills it flies;
On it the sun his glory sheds
And bursts it into shining shreds;

And bright through fields of azure air
Like sheets of gold those mists repair,
Through spaces spread wide their flying train
Like fleeting fancies of the brain.
And lost in space they disappear
Like human hope and joy and fear.

II.

The sun moves up his destined way
And cheers the world with his warm ray,
Seems all things wake to rapture rife,
Assume the ruddy hues of life;
And strengthened by their night's repose,
The virgin blush of joy disclose.
At his bright coming all the world
In glory and in light is furled,
Wrapt in a robe of flashing gems
More bright than queenly diadems,
That with their beauty overwhelms
All other gaud in nature's realms,
And fills with warmth and vigor rife
All things that nature throbs with life.
Roused from his lair by coming morn
The roe looks from his den of thorn,
Sees with glad heart the day begun,
And hails with joy the rising sun;
Feels strengthened 'neath the coming sheen
And bounds to pastures fresh and green.
And happy birds on flapping wing,
Make hills and glens and forests ring
With gladsome songs they ceaseless sing;
Hail with delight his coming beam,
And lave their wings in rill and stream.

All birds of air and beasts of field
A homage to his splendors yield,
The bleating sheep and lowing kine
Delighted hail his coming shine;
And leaping skip around the fold,
Or gambol over field and wold;
Frolic before his coming glow
With pranks no other time they show.
The goat leaps from his leavy lair
And sniffs with joy the morning air,
Spreads on the wind his flowing beard
And bounds where tallest heights are rear'd.
With haughty neigh, the gallant steed
Sees earth by morn of darkness freed,
With head erect and nostrils wide,
And eyes that flash with lordly pride,
He sees the new-born day begun;
And gazing on the rising sun
He shakes the dew drops from his mane,
And neighing bounds along the plain
High on the mountain's tallest crest
Where hangs from giddy crags his nest,
With flapping wings and joyous scream
The eagle hails the rising beam;
On soaring pinions speeds his flight
'Till hid in azure fields of light;
'Till lost in boundless realms of space
Where he can view all nature's face.
The stately hound with leap and whine,
Delighted sees the morning's shine;
Speeds o'er the hills in swift career,
Or scents through glens the bounding deer

Yes, everything in nature born
Hails with delight the coming morn;
With gladness hails the rising sun
Dispersing night and vapors dun.
Yes, everything in nature's state,
The animate and inanimate,
By color, sound or glowing gleam,
A welcome gives his rising beam;
The love of all his rays have won,
For life they breathe from out the sun.

III.

But ere had dawned the morning's light,
The maiden and that gallant knight
In quest of fair Clotilda sped,
And roused her from her slumbers dread;
Soon as the holy Grail they bore
Beside the maid, her sleep was o'er,
Her eyelids oped, her sleep was done,
And sped like mists before the sun,
No more the necromancer's thrall
Bound body, soul and senses all.
She rose from off the wizard's lair
As light as springs a form of air,
And with a wild, bewildered stare
She eyes the knight and maiden there;
Who in their turn with wonder see
Her of the wizard's slumber free,
And all that throng of maidens fair
Who slept around Clotilda there,
Were roused from out their slumbers deep,
Their fell, enchanted, wizard's sleep.
And thus her tale Clotilda tells
How all came there through wizard's spells:

IV.

The day you left King Arthur's hall
To journey with that hoary man,
I vowed, let good or ill befall,
I'd follow over mountain wall,
O'er bridgeless voids and summits tall,
And fiercest streams that ever ran;
No danger drear in nature wide
Should keep me from my idol's side;
So I and all this maiden throng
Set forth on our palfreys strong;
An open way before us lay
Through brake, through glen, o'er wold and hill
We journeyed 'till the close of day
Nor met with least of dole or ill.
On sand, on rock, on moss and sod,
Fresh horse tracks we could ever scan,
That showed where steeds had lately trod,
Rode by you and that hoary man.
As night closed in, and hill and dell
Were donn'd in sable robes of mist,
And their black arms round glen and fell
The spirits stern of darkness twist.
We saw a vast and lofty tower
High on a rocky mountain lower.
Swift up the winding way we sped
That to the lofty tower led,
Wide open were its portals thrown
And to us there was Merlin shown,
He bade us welcome and we rode
Through the threshold in the strange abode.
Then we heard the huge portecullis fall,
And iron gate close 'gainst the wall,

And knew we were in Merlin's thrall;
And soon we on our palfreys range
Throughout a court-yard wild and strange,
Away our palfrey's reins we flung,
And to the earth we lightly sprung;
We reached a hall of grand array,
To which grim Merlin led the way,
Around bright lights their lustre shed,
And round were crimson couches spread.
A drowsy sleep o'ertook us all;
One by one I saw these maidens fall
Each on a couch in slumber deep,
And soon myself, I sank to sleep.
The last thing there that I beheld
Just ere I was to slumber quelled
Was Merlin standing by my bed
Waving a wand above my head;
His flowing beard as white as frost
Was over all his bosom tost;
His hoary locks in mighty hoard
Hung down o'er all his shoulders broad;
His sable eyes like lightnings glowed
'Neath brows that white and shaggy flowed;
And his strange features seemed the lair
Of wretchedness and grim despair;
As if all sorrows, woes and grief,
All cares that know of no relief—
Had on him swooped in one fell storm
And bent and knarled his awful form.
He looked like some old mountain oak
That long had stood the tempest's stroke,
And felt the lightnings round it hurled,
Which left it scorched and torn and knurled;

That winter decks with fleecy snows
But every knar distinctly shows,
Each withered branch and blighted stem
Where leaves no more shall spring from them,
But soon the storms shall scatter wide
O'er vale and stream and mountain side.
As ceased her tale a wondrous stir
Filled all the air around,
All like that swift and sudden whirl
From flying arrows sound;
Like the murmur of may bees
When round their hives they swarm,
Like the buzz of collected flies
On eve of summer storm;
Like the low droning of the sea
When winds are sleeping round,
Like hum from Eolian harps
Doth come the whirring sound.
And from a spot of naked earth
That did but rock disclose,
Sudden as phantom springs to sight
The form of Merlin rose.
All full of griefs and full of years
The aged seer appeared,
Down o'er his breast and shoulders broad
Flowed white his hair and beard;
Though many marks they both revealed
Where scorching flame had past,
Singed was his beard and singed his hair,
And charrs his robe o'er cast;
A twitching all his form revealed
As smote by palsy grim,

Or else it seemed some nakir dread
 Posessed him every limb.
His brawny hands and arms were bare,
 And hard their thews were knarr'd,
O'er them the prints of flame were seen,
 These too with flame were scarr'd;
His brows and beard all o'er his face
 Through singeing flames were marr'd.
Sudden with form erect and tall
 All changed to vigor good,
Before the knight and maiden throug
 The hoary wizard stood;
And with a voice as wierd and wild
 As when night dons her hood
And the breezes bring the sighs of ghosts
 From out some olden wood
He spoke: Ere I to the nadir go
 To there through eon dwell,
I would alike to friend and foe
 All peaceful bid farewell.
Soon will my time on earth be o'er,
 My place shall others win.
For too much goodness corrupts the work?
 As well as too much sin,
A full and equal share of both
 This whole round world must sway;
Too much action, or too much sloth
 Would make the world decay.
Old styles, old things must pass away
 And make room for the new,
Fancies, customs, habits, laws must change
 All ever nature knew;

Ignorance dwells with the multitude
And wisdom with the few.
The common soldier of the ranks
Can countless comrades boast,
But still only one head, one brain,
To glory leads the host.
The bees are many in the hive,
The drones in swarms are seen,
But howe'er vast they seem to be
They only show one queen.
Birds are many in the air:
The swallow, sparrow, jay,
Their countless kindred show around
On every leavy spray;
But more than one eagle at a time
We scarcely e'er survey;
The slave his countless kindred boasts
On moor, on hill and field,
But to one chief, one king alone
His trooping kindred yield.
The stars are many in the sky,
But only one bright sun
Warms up and cheers the earth, while it
Through boundless space is spun,
And keeps it from eternal chill
And vapors dank and dun.
The trees are many on the hills,
Of every size and form—
But only one good sturdy oak
Withstood the lightning's blasting stroke,
The thunder and the storm.
Flowers are many o'er the earth
Of every shape and hue,

But those that claim the gardener's care
Are but a wondrous few.
The shells are many on the beach,
Yet in only one was seen
The pearl that pleased the monarch's eye,
And decks the brow of queen.
And for some cause unknown to me
I'm different from my kind,
In subtle secrets I am skill'd
To which my race is blind.
I walk the paths of life alone
And do the will of fate.
Mysteries, I unveil, undo,
Or mysteries create;
And over man 'till now I've been
Despotic potentate.
I have but swayed the wand of power
With all my might and will,
That fate entrusted unto me
For either good or ill.
And having done what fate decreed
My mystic force should do,
I've but done my duty here, and been
Unto my nature true;
No fault that man shall find shall make
Me any action rue;
Had I a thousand years to live
I'd still my ways pursue.
I curse, I bless, I guard, I harm,
I succor, aid, defeat,
I arm the hero or disarm,
His courage, cool or heat;

All weal or woe that he endures
Alike to me are sweet
As honey to the taste, or wine
Unto the drunkard's lips,
Or dew unto the thirsty bud
It in the drought-time sips.
Sweet as is unto the miser
The glitter of his hoard,
Sweet as is unto the hero
The trophies of his sword,
Sweet as is unto the mother
The smile of her first-born,
Sweet as to benighted traveller
The glimmer of the morn,
Sweet as the first warm kiss of love
Of maiden and of youth,
Sweet as the secret vows they breathe—
All hope and faith and truth—
Sweet as to the drowning sailor
The hand that succor brings,
Sweet as to the butterfly
The splendor of its wings;
So sweet, so dear, unto my soul
Is all my magic lore;
Give me the wisdom of the seer,
I ask of Fate no more.
Let me but in my selfhood own
The wizard's power and sway.
I care not for all else that is
Throughout wide Nature's way.
And as a seer upon this earth
I here would linger still—

Through immortality of good,
Immortality of ill.
Of Fate I comprehend the goal—
Have studied every part;
Those parts were atoms of the whole,
Made up its body, mind and soul,
And all that did its life control—
So I know it all by heart.
Time with me is hoar, and Fate decrees
Me for some other clime,
Where I shall work for weal or woe
Beyond the walls of Time;
And there, like here, I still shall move
Through tower, o'er glen and hill,
Unseen by eyes of living thing,
Except when e'er I will.
Though fashioned like mankind I am,
And life-blood through me flows,
Yet, in shine or shade, by day or night.
My form no shadow throws;
And where I tread, save when I will,
No mortal vision knows.
Though I journey to some other sphere,
Beyond the coast of Time,
Yet Fate decrees I shall once more
Be seen upon this clime.
Ere yonder moon shall wane and change,
And full become once more,
I here shall tread in power dread,
A wizard as of yore;
For on these hills the hosts of Rome
Shall, for the last time, meet

The knights renowned of the Table Round,
With war King Arthur greet ;
And on one side shall glory bide,
On the other grim defeat,
But which shall vanquish, which shall fly,
Fate bids me not foretell ;
For two whole days the strife shall last,
And spread a havoc fell ;
And midst that fight, in all my might
And glory, as of old,
From out the earth shall I arise,
And me shall all behold.
My magic flag with me shall rise,
A phantom to the sight,
And it shall wave in windless air,
As midst a tempest's might ;
And on that side shall Merlin ride
Who'll conquer in that fight.
Farewell ; be wise, be good, be true,
Be ever virtuous still ;
Fear only God, where'er ye be,
And guard 'gainst sin and ill.
Do this by night and day, and ye
Shall your destinies fulfil,
And overwhelm the wizard's might,
His force, his fraud and will.
Still bless, not curse, your mortal foe ;
Do as the sandal-tree,
That doth a sweet perfume bestow
Unto the axe that lays it low
In death upon the lea.
Sow your seed for good in faith and hope,
And water it with tears ;

So choice fruit, in God's bright light, 'twill bear
 Within the coming years.
Who sows the seed is answerable
 For the harvest that it rears.
Both good and ill their deeds have wrought,
 Through all the boundless past ;
Both for the mastery have warred,
 And still their strife shall last
Through all the ages yet to come,
 Till, midst wasting ruins strown,
The hidden generations rest,
 And Time is with moss o'ergrown.
Faith, hope and love and charity,
 Be ever with you still—
I'd not wish ye else, e'en could I
Heap over ye, as mountains high,
 Famine, war and every ill.
May Glory walk beside ye still
 Where'er your feet invade,
And keep with ye through good or ill
 The vast world's promenade.
But thou, Sir Knight, a deed must do
 Ere yet five days be past ;
Thou, with thy hoary guide, the Jew,
 Must cross an ocean vast,
And sail into the Polar seas,
 To realms of ice and snow,
Where only rocks of ice are seen,
 And freezing tempests blow.
There, midst those mountains grim of ice,
 Within a cavern deep,
My only child, Ursula, dwells,
 Wrapt in a charmed sleep.

For just six hundred years and one
Has she been sleeping there,
Guarded by ghouls and demons grim
That rule the Polar sphere ;
And never from her slumber drear
Shall she arise again,
Till a knight renowned of the Table Round
Shall tread that frozen main.
Thou art the knight, described of yore,
The man by Fate decreed
To journey to those realms of snow,
And do the daring deed ;
Yes, end a father's wasting woe,
And glory is thy need ;
For thou shalt save from lasting harm
As fair and pure a maid
As since the birth of time has walked
The huge world's promenade.
This eve a barge will wait for thee,
Moor'd to an ocean pier ;
Thy hoary guide will go with thee,
And o'er floods the barge will steer.
Go, do the task that Fate decreed ;
From rigid realms of snow
Carry forth the loveliest maid
That ever Time shall know.

V.

As the bubble leaves the gazer's eye,
Upon the water's face,
And o'er all the realm of water
Behind it leaves no trace—

So swift, complete and suddenly
Grim Merlin left the place.
Ere on his tongue the last word died,
Gone was the hoary seer;
Far swifter than a flash of thought
He melted into air.
While gazed the knight and maidens there,
With wonder and surprise,
Their startled senses scarce believing
The witness of their eyes,
They heard the heavy tramp of steeds
Within the vale below;
The clash of arms, the clang of steel,
And heard a trumpet blow.
A thousand knights, on thousand steeds,
Came plunging up the hill—
The knights renowned of the Table Round,
Whose fame the nations fill.
Arthur, the good, of knightlihood
The choicest flower on earth,
That ever dared a noble deed,
Since Time has had its birth,
Rode by the side of the hoary guide,
The Jew, who there had led,
Through lonely, winding ways, De Main,
And there had from him sped.
Around the knight and maidens there
The horsemen throng amain;
With shouts of joy that sounded wide
Their snorting steeds they rein.
Sheathed was each knight in armor bright,
From head to heel it glowed;

And down o'er easques of burnished steel
Plumes of varied colors flowed.
From off his steed King Arthur sprang,
And doffed his glove of steel;
The hero's hand he grasped, and said :
"Thou noble knight and leal,
No braver soul in Fate's control
Was e'er in mortal stored;
No braver heart and stronger hand
Has ever drawn a sword.
Thy fame shall last till time is o'er,
And ceased has even earth,
And then in other worlds than this
Shall angels sing thy worth.
And what is all this path through life,
Though Fortune's gifts be scattered rife,
And all exempt from woe,
If we don't leave behind our name
Enrolled upon the page of fame,
With never-fading glow,
To live in story and in song,
While the centuries sweep along,
So all our worth shall know?
Demons of every woe and ill,
That long have cursed my realm,
The prowess of thy soul and arm
Did all with ruin overwhelm.
Thou art the knight whom God decreed
Should burst the wizards' spell,
And crush out all their force and fraud
They've brought to earth from hell.
Now what more can I say or do
Than thank thee, noble knight and true,

And aid thee more of glory win?"
At this the hoary guide broke in :
" More glory he must yet achieve ;
Fate him from toil will not relieve.
Ursula's slumber he must wake,
And her from Polar demons take ;
And other tasks as dread and grim
Be wrought, Fate has decreed. by him.
I am his guide, ordered by Fate
Him to lead, on him watch and wait.
Here shortly shall a war be waged,
Dread as e'er 'tween mortals raged ;
Heroes shall die by thousands here,
And clothe these hills with carnage drear ;
These hills shall all be dyed with blood,
And red shall flow each mountain flood.
Ursula must that carnage see,
And forward in that slaughter be.
She shall that day a deed achieve
That shall this realm of woes relieve.
But more I cannot tell you now,
For rigid Fate will not allow.
Come, let us go to yonder glen,
And see the slaughtered dragon's den ;
And view the hoards of solid gold,
That there have lain since ages old."

VI.

Into the den the knights have sped,
Led by the hoary Jew,
Where dwelt the dragon grim and dread
The hero's arm o'erthrew.

From out the den wealth they bring forth,
From where it's lain for years,
Gathered from west, east, south and north,
Wherever hoard appears.
Huge was the cavern, broad and long,
And vast from floor to roof;
Nine columns tall of solid rock
From falling kept it proof;
Its granite walls were wide apart,
A thousand yards aloof.
Yet piled was it with golden hoard
From rocky roof to floor;
The shining treasures meet their eyes
Where'er the knights explore.
Silver and gold, and precious stones—
All riches of the world—
Were promiscuous gathered there,
In glowing piles were hurled;
Mighty thrones, cast in solid gold,
Set o'er with starry gems;
Kings, queens, wrought out of gold, and decked
With flashing diadems,
Sat midst forests wrought of gold,
With diamond leaves and stems;
And every beast that roams the field,
The mountain, moor or fen;
And many a monster, grim and vast,
Now all unknown to men,
Had there his likeness cast in gold,
His lifelike size and mien.
There camels, lions, elephants,
With golden steeds, were seen;

And every bird that flaps its wings
Within the realms of space,
Wrought of pure gold, in lifelike size,
Was found within that place ;
And every fish and monster grim,
That through the depths of ocean swim,
Was there displayed in perfect trim,
Of solid gold each form and limb.
Where'er the searching eyes explore
Are flashing gems and golden ore ;
Goblets and urns and mighty trays,
The wealth of kings of other days,
All wrought of gold, with splendor blaze.

VII.

A thousand knights are toiling fast
To bring away the treasure vast ;
A thousand knights, with sinews strong
As those that to the steeds belong,
With all their strength can scarcely lift,
Or yet from out their places shift,
Some of those castings broad and tall ;
To move them takes the strength of all ;
Their gathered force assistance needs,
And levers, fulcrums, chains and steeds,
Are brought to aid them bring the hoard
From out the dragon's cavern broad.
Upon the wold round Arteloise
They pile the dragon's shining toys,
The wealth of Cyclops kings of old,
Who stored it in that rocky hold ;
And, spite of human swords and spears,

Had rested there two thousand years.
While heroes toil to bring this hoard
From out the cavern deep and broad,
That cavern lonely, drear and dun,
And pile it in the blazing sun—
Heap up a mound of shining ore
As never sunlight saw before—
And while Griselda, sheathed in mail,
With Arthur, guards the Holy Grail,
The sun has set, and night amain
Is thickening over hill and plain;
The stars display their glowing sheen,
And in the east the moon is seen.
And from the knights and heroes there
Two forms are missed, search everywhere.
Their departure none can explain—
One is the Jew, one Beau de Main.

VIII.

A barge moored to the ocean's beach
The hero and his guide soon reach;
And in it swift the eager twain
Go sailing o'er the silent main.
The air was still, no breezes blew,
Yet swift across the seas they flew;
Their sails were full, as if a gale
Did them with all its force assail.
The silent ocean stretched around
In one calm slumber deep and sound,
And scarce those silent floods reveal
A furrow from the plowing keel.
Yet on and on upon her course

She sped before some magic force,
And swifter than a thing of thought
Her flight she o'er the waters sought.
Onward, o'er floods profound, they drew,
Until two mountains rose in view :
Abyla, one, that proudly stands
And views the sea from Afric's lands ;
The other that frowned o'er the main
Was Calpe, on the coast of Spain.
Here, onward through narrowing seas,
They pass the Pillars of Hereules.
Onward they speed, and soon they gain
A spacious and a tranquil main,
Where the Mediterranean wave
Doth shores of many nations lave,
And soon in sight of Ætna's flame
The hoary guide and hero came.
High on the prow the good knight stands,
And views afar the mountain lands,
While thus unto his hoary guide
He speaks : " Let good or ill betide,
I swore to journey by thy side,
And reach with thee the Polar main,
Ursula wake to life again,
The craft of Polar fiends o'erthrow,
And crush them from the realm of snow,
Make all their force to mankind bow,
If God would me the deed allow.
But we are sailing fast, I scan,
To regions of far different plan.
What does this mean? Come, swift explain
Why sail we thus this Southern main,
And see the lights of Ætna glow

Instead of Polar ice and snow.”
To this the hoary Jew replied :
“ I am by Fate decreed thy guide.
Henceforth through all thy mortal life,
Through pleasure, trouble, peace or strife,
Through every throe of bliss or woes
That mortal nature feels or knows
I am thy guide, and 'tis thy fate
To follow me, on me to wait.
Did proper faith in thee abide.
For him who is thy destined guide
Thou wouldst not ask with haughty air
And doubting soul, ‘ Why sail we here ? ’
No matter where on earth I went
Thy heart and soul should be content,
And feel the while I did my task,
And of me none of questions ask.
But as thy mind is full of doubt,
I now will turn it inside out,
Shake from it all that therein be
And fill it full of faith for me,
And since we shall together wend
Until thy race on earth shall end,
Be we within the rear or van,
Be thou in every sense a man ;
Through weal or woe, through peace or strife.
Unflinching grasp the end of Life,
Pluck mid its thorns the buds and fruit,
What best thy will or fancy suit,
What most thy nature seems to need,
Nor let shadows of the Future feed
And fatten as may suit their greed
Upon the substance and the wealth

Of the present, nor sap its health.
Revel in pleasures well thy soul,
Yet keep those pleasures in control.
I trust we two shall understand
Each other well, and hand in hand
Keep upon our destined way,
Nor feel a doubt by night or day
Of any careless word or deed
That may from either one proceed.
Have faith in me is all I ask
And thou'lt accomplish every task.
I guide thee now from haunts of men
Unto the mighty Cyclops' den ;
We soon shall pass the sullen gorge
That leads to Vulcan's roaring forge,
And armor he for thee shall make
No force of fiend nor man can break,
No frost shall crack, no spear shall pierce,
However dread the foe and fierce.
The arms that now thy form invest,
Though strong as ever hero dressed,
And are most pleasing to the eye,
Would all to smallest atoms fly
If ever midst the Polar snow
The icy blasts on them should blow,
And any demon's sword or spear
Its force should e'er against them bear.
To wage with it 'gainst them a strife
Would cost thee swift thy fame and life.
By Vulcan must thy arms be wrought
Ere war with Polar fiends is sought.
The tempered steel he only makes
That never Polar demon breaks ;

The arms no demon's sword nor spear
Can cleave or yet asunder tear."

IX.

While thus they spoke they reached the gorge
That led to Vulcan's flaming forge.
Right through the mountain's open side
The ocean forced its rushing tide,
And onward swift as light or thought
The barge the forge of Vulcan sought.
Down, down on waters swift and vast
The barge by seething whirlpools past
Until it reached the rocky gorge
Where flamed on high grim Vulcan's forge.
High on his dusty iron throne
The mighty monarch sat alone;
His shaggy brows with dust were grim,
And dust lay on each shaggy limb.
As some huge column, damp and rust,
Doth with a scaly garb o'er crust,
O'er his vast form was sweat and dust.
His flowing tresses, black as night,
Hid half his features from the sight,
And o'er his breast and shoulders broad
They flowed in vast, enormous hoard.
Like beams of steel his thewy arms
Displayed their Cyclopean charms.
His mighty hands a vigor showed
Which is alone to gods bestowed,
And only by those gods is shared
Who midst toil and temperance are reared
Athwart his brow his hand he drew,

From off his face his locks he threw,
Beneath his forge's flaming light
Displayed his features to the sight.
Comelier head and nobler brow
Did ne'er before a god endow.
Sublime he looked in form and limb;
Immortal grandeur breathed in him.
In his mild eye and noble face
A kindly soul the knight could trace;
On that vast visage robed with hair
Good nature kept her chosen lair,
And seem'd there beam'd from it the while
A rising or a smothered smile.
Swift from the barge the hero trod
And with his guide approached the god,
But ere they reached his iron throne
The monarch spoke in kindly tone.

X.

" I know thy wants, know all the cause,
Sir Knight, that here thy presence draws,
And I for thee will forge the steel
That sheathes thy form from head to heel
In such strong plates of tempered mail
That shall no foe with hurt assail.
Sir Knight, thee I will make the lord
Of such an axe and spear and sword
As never yet were grasped by man
Since on the earth his race began,
And such a casque thy head shall wear
As never did to man appear.
And I will make thee such a targe

To pierce it vainly foes shall charge.
In every climate 'neath the sun
Where breezes blow or waters run,
Where southern suns terrific glow.
And metals force to molten flow,
Where winter wraps the Polar main
In bondage with its icy chain,
Those arms by climate all unchanged—
No atom of them disarranged—
Shall still remain wher e'er they go,
Whate'er the clime, whate'er the foe,
And e'en the lustre of thy mail
Shall make the fiercest foeman quail.”
So smiling spake the mighty god,
And to his flaming furnace trod,
Where stacks on stacks in grim repose
Huge as a ridge of mountains rose.
A mighty door he open threw
And his vast works disclosed to view.
The knight through all the place immense
Gazed with a wonder deep, intense,
For vast machines with mighty wheels
From end to end the place reveals,
And tools of every shape and size
With wonder mute the hero eyes.
Soon Vulcan touched a secret spring
And motion sprang to everything;
Straight at the touch seem'd all things fraught
With attributes of life and thought:
All things an inspiration caught
That were with instant motion wrought;
Then, obedient to his call,
Came forth three Cyclops giants tall;

Arges, Brontes and Steropes came
Soon as the god called forth each name.
Each all their days in steel had wrought,
His skill to them had Vulcan taught ;
Each well the tongs or sledge could wield
And forge the spear, the helm or shield ;
No armor used by mortal man
Or gods but what those three could plan,
Nor missile e'er in battle thrown
But what unto those three was known.
The thunderbolts their wisdom formed
When gods in angry warfare stormed,
And when grim Briareus strove
To overwhelm the might of Jove,
Skill'd in all craft of forging steel,
And ever unto Vulcan leal,
They forged the arms of gods and men,
And waked with sound his mighty den.
From Cœlus and Terra sprung their birth,
Nor feared they aught on sky or earth.

XI.

From forge to forge, whencee roaring flame
Like streams from grim volcanoes came,
And vast showers of sparks fell round,
With blinding light and hissing sound,
Those three enormous Cyclops flew
And in the flames the metals threw.
Swift from the stacks the molten ore
Doth into huge converters pour,
Then swift on it a mighty blast
Of freezing air is constant cast ;

It rushes through the spacious tuyeres,
And it to purest metal rears.
Then swift they search each huge retort,
And metal from the dross they sort.
Through crushing rollers swift 'tis brought
And into solid metal wrought,
And then the flowing ore assumes
The stately structure of the blooms.
Again the blooms with flame are tried
Until no dross is there espied.
Through melting flame and freezing blast
Again, again the steel is past,
Till all from dross is doubly pure,
And all is tempered true and sure.
Then mighty bars of red-hot steel
They pass from crushing wheel to wheel;
Then, swung upon a mighty crane,
They bear it to the flame again;
There bring it to a snow-white heat,
Then it upon the anvils beat
With sledges of gigantic size,
Whose blows like loudest thunders rise.
Again, with tongs and swinging crane,
They cast it midst the flames amain;
The bellows roar, the flames arise,
And all save metal from it flies.
Then on the anvil swift they shape
The arms that shall the hero drape.
Then Vulcan spoke: "Thy body bare
Of that frail mortal mail you wear,
O'er thee we'll brace an armor on
Fit for a god himself to don."
Swift from his form, from head to heel,

The hero doffed his clanging steel,
And bared as strong and perfect form
Of man as e'er felt shine or storm.
The Cyclops smiths with wonder view
The symmetry of limb and thew,
The swelling chest and shoulders broad
That showed of strength a matchless board.
Such limbs and thews the hero wore
Had never met their gaze before.
His mighty shoulders first they sheathe
With plates that round and round him wreath;
With triple care his brawny breast
With flashing plates of steel is drest;
Down o'er his form unto his thighs
They fit the plates of wondrous size;
In blazing steel his legs they ease,
Thick layers o'er the joints they place;
Then all the foot, from toe to heel,
They ease in adamantine steel;
Then straight a flashing casque they wrought
That was with strange devices fraught;
From purest steel the helm was made,
And all with burnished gold inlaid.
The hero's head the morion wears,
The polished visor next appears;
With care within its grooves 'tis placed,
By cords of steel securely laced;
Collars of adamantine mail
Guard sure his throat from foe's assail;
Then next, round as the maiden moon
When full in all her prime of noon,
Or sun in his empyrean field,
They shape the hero's massive shield.

Seven layers of purest steel
Dense as did sledge and anvil feel
In thickness vast compose the shield,
While yet, to vaster sureness yield,
'Gainst flying shaft or driven spear,
Or harm that heat or cold can rear,
Vast fleecy hides as white as snow
Are placed in order row on row—
Between the shining plates are laid,
And all the space between invade,
Then press'd together close and hard,
By weight immense the whole is barred
Secure together, strong and fast,
By bolts and screws and rivets vast.
Then next a mighty boss they reared,
Which on its centre grim appeared,
Then on the inward disc they weld
The rings, with many a blow impelled,
By which it on the arm is held.
The shield, complete in make and strength,
Through all its thickness, breadth and length
The searching eyes of Vulcan view ;
His chisel o'er its face he drew ;
Engraving strange that mighty shield
Soon wore o'er all its ample field ;
Strange scenes where e'er his chisel goes
Like magic o'er the surface rose.
First on the shining field he drew
The heavens and all the stars we view ;
There shone in calm and bright array
The sun and moon and milky way ;
Shot from the sun, the comets burn'd,
Or flaming, back to him returned ;

The distant systems rose to sight,
With suns and moons and planets bright;
Then far below the earth he drew
Its oceans, mountains rose to view;
Its rivers rush, its torrents flow,
The sunshine gleams, the tempests blow;
O'er wold and dell the forests grow;
In air their stately heads they throw.
Then clouds he drew, as if to robe
With floating mists the spacious globe;
The sun o'er these his lustre throws,
And splendor o'er the broad shield glows.
In living motion oceans roll'd,
The hues of silver and of gold,
And over mountain, glen and wold
They stretched their bright, transparent fold.
Vast harvest fields with ripened grain
With sickle showed the reaper train,
And fields of corn in waving rows
Beneath the artist's chisel grows;
The purple vineyards deck the shield,
And grapes hang vast o'er hill and field;
Then mighty heads in pastures green
Upon the massive targe are seen;
O'er skipping lambs and grazing sheep
Their careful watch the shepherds keep.
Then swift unto the hero's view
Vast jungles o'er the buckler grew;
The lion, bear and tiger grim
Seem'd there alive in form and limb;
Huge elephants their trunks uprear,
And moving on the shield appear,
And mighty monsters, now unknown

To man, were on that buckler shown ;
Round some their coils dread serpents wreathed
And seem'd they struggled and they breathed.
A city next the artist graved,
Whose streets with shining gold were paved,
High rose the massive walls around,
With battlements and turrets crown'd ;
Upon these walls, all dread to view,
By Vulcan's hand an army grew ;
The shield and sword and bristling spear
Vast, dense o'er all those walls appear ;
Besieged the city seems ; below
The plains with moving armies glow ;
Huge battering-rams he swiftly form'd,
And seem'd those walls those engines storm'd ;
Wide breaches in the walls were made,
Through which the troops the town invade ;
Grim piles of slaughter throng the streets,
Everywhere the eye but ruin meets ;
Children and women, old and young,
With men are midst the carnage flung ;
Lie son and sire, mother, daughter,
In promiscuous piles of slaughter.
The victors from the city lead
Their captive maids o'er field and mead ;
Then seemed an all-engulfing flame
Around throughout that city came ;
Beneath its force the city falls—
Palaces, battlements and walls,
And naught but ashes, gray and pale,
Are left to tell its dreadful tale.
Another city swift arose ;
Round it the azure ocean flows,

And ships unnumbered o'er its waves
The artist's skillful hand engraves ;
All, all those seas are white with sails,
They glide where e'er the flood prevails.
Vast wharves and piers, secure from storm,
Safe harbors round that city form ;
O'er these his hand the artist casts—
Straight bristle there unnumbered masts,
And all around on either hand
Stand moored the ships of every land,
And every nation of the world
Has there its standard sheet unfurled,
And men of every clime and race
That ever trod the earth's broad face
In busy hives that city throng,
And all to peaceful calls belong ;
No strife nor discord there is found
Through all that city's ample round ;
They sell or buy in crowded marts
The wares or works of peaceful arts,
And through that city peace and mirth
Spring up in spontaneous birth.
Far from that city, vast to view,
An ocean into icebergs grew ;
Fixed as the hills or rocky plain,
So solid seem'd that frozen main.
A stately vessel thrall'd in ice,
Secure as steel in Vulcan's vice,
High on the flocs displayed its form,
Unwrecked by frost or Polar storm ;
Upon the deck the sailors stand,
Froze stark and dead, a ghastly band,
But deep within that vessel's hold,

White as the whitest frost on wold,
Is seen a lovely female form
That sleeps unscathed by cold or storm;
A wondrous form, whose features smile,
As though she joyous dreamed the while.
Another town the artist forms,
Exempt from war and blast and storms;
No walls around the city stand,
But purple vineyards crown the land;
Vast fields of wheat and waving corn
That city's fertile realms adorn,
And scenes of joy and mirth and peace
Seem ever round it to increase;
With plenty all the land is crown'd;
Whatever good for man is found,
Or beast, where e'er we gaze around
Spring spontaneous from the ground;
By winding streams, through leafy shades
The shepherds lead their smiling maids;
In endless peace and safety too
In hall or grove their loves they woo;
And over all that city's round,
O'er all its broad and ample bound,
Is naught but pleasing pleasures found
In every turn and sight and sound.
Another scene the artist drew;
A mighty dragon rose in view;
Vast was his head and huge his jaws,
His limbs immense, with horrid claws,
And from his throat a flood of flame
Red as is blood eternal came;
O'er all his hide a horny scale

Was placed like plates of hardest mail,
And mighty rows of teeth were seen
The monster's horrid jaws between.
Another scene the eye engaged,
The beast with man a combat waged ;
A knight all sheathed from head to heel
In glowing panoply of steel
His flaming falchion drove amain,
And cleft the monster grim in twain.
High on its form the hero stands,
And treads it in the gory sands ;
To ruin trod, it sinks from view,
And where it died a flower grew.
The shield complete in every part,
Adorned with all of Vulcan's art,
The monarch of the flaming forge,
Whose flames but purest steel disgorge,
Unto the knight the vast targe bore,
And soon his arm the buckler wore.
The hero, sheathed from head to heel,
A mighty column seemed of steel,
A tower vast, sure built of mail
That vainly might all foes assail.
Behind his shield the hero's frame
Far broader seem'd, more tall became.
Then o'er his mail and massive shield
A wand the hands of Vulcan wield,
And straight from all his arms a light
Of blinding blaze, redundant bright,
Shot forth in never ending gleam,
And did from all his buckler beam.
Then Vulcan spoke : " Thy armor's sheen

Shall last while leaves and vintage green
Are known and seen in summer's prime,
And know no change through wear of time.
The dazzling lustre of thy mail
Shall all thy foes with fear assail."
Then swift an axe and sword and spear
Those smiths upon their anvils rear.
First a ponderous axe they wrought,
Then to the knight a spear they brought.
Fast from a bloom of purest steel,
Refined as e'er did Vulcan feel,
With sounds that make all Ætna reel
And rock with ringing blows they deal,
They forge for him a mighty sword
Of surface bright and long and broad.
Bellows roar, flames to whiteness burn ;
With tongs in flames the mass they turn ;
Through rollers vast the mass is brought,
And into flatter structure wrought.
By turns the steel they cool or heat,
And it upon the anvils beat.
With blows that shake the forges round
And like incessant thunders sound
They wrought for him the breakless sword,
The adamantyne falchion broad.
The hilt with starry gems is crown'd,
And flash a blinding brightness round.
The sword complete, in sheath is placed,
And soon the hero's hand it graced :
The sword that soon its way should take
Through every mail of mortal make,
Beneath whose weight all foes should reel
And die, the adamantyne steel.

XII.

But ere unto the hero's hand
Wise Vulcan gave the new-made brand,
To prove its strength and tempered edge
He lifts from earth an iron wedge
Of structure hard, compact and dense,
Of size enormous, weight immense;
The wedge he on the anvil laid,
Then grasps the new-made, shining blade;
High o'er his head the sword he swings,
Down on the wedge its edge he brings.
Unto the blow he gave such strength
The wedge was cut through all its length;
Nor stopped at this the mighty sword,
Down through the anvil tall and broad
Like lightning past the edge amain,
The ponderous anvil cleft in twain:
Parted the solid structures lie.
Along its edge the searching eye
And hand of skillful Vulcan ran
Nor flaw along its edge could scan.
All, all its edge was perfect, keen,
And as is blinding leven-sheen
When through the gloom of darkness driven;
Then to the knight the sword was given.
'Twas Vulcan's hand the blade bestowed,
And thus his voice his feelings showed:
"Since ever forge or furnace glowed
And metals from their heat have flowed
No mightier panoply of steel
Has sheathed a knight from head to heel.
Speed on thy way, perform each task

That Fate shall of thy prowess ask ;
Honor high Heaven with all thy soul,
Let naught thy love for God control
Whatever place by thee be trod,
For all thy glory is from God.
For true glory only draw this blade,
And Vulcan's toil is well repaid."
He ceased, and from his vast abode
The hoary guide and hero strode ;
They reach the torrent's sounding marge ;
Their footsteps tread the stately barge,
And soon they pass the sullen gorge
That leads to earth from Vulcan's forge.
Once more upon the ocean wide
They Ætna's flaming peak espied.
By lands of bloom and scented isles
O'er which the moon in splendor smiles
The barge sails on, nor breezes waits,
And passes soon again the straits,
Into the wide Atlantic sails,
And soon the shores of Norway hails ;
O'er the dread maelstrom, white with foam,
Still ever onward North they roam ;
North, ever North they onward sail
Until the Polar seas they hail,
The mountains vast of ice and snow,
Where ever-freezing tempests blow.

XIII.

Moor'd midst the cliffs of gleaming ice,
The Polar spirits' paradise,
Soon quit the barge the eager twain

And journey o'er the frozen main ;
They reached a pile of mighty halls,
Ice was the roof and ice the walls,
Through windows of transparent ice
Clearer than glass, with strange device
Wrought over all their vast expanse,
The lights from moon and stars advance ;
Their sheen strikes on the gleaming walls,
This refraction into motion calls
And one transmitting splendor falls
From place to place through all those halls.
Within the place was bright as day
When Sol at noontide pours his ray,
And not a cloud is seen to march
Through all the clear, ethereal arch.
With scanning eyes the knight proceeds,
Follows his guide where e'er he leads ;
Around where e'er his vision strays
He relies sees of former days ;
In crystal ice embedded fast,
As they had been for ages past,
Were seen the forms of monsters grim
And perfect all in form and limb
As when alive they stalked the world
Ere freezing floods were round them hurl'd.
Many still seem'd endowed with breath,
As if they ne'er yet felt of death.
Some monsters were of form and limb
Tremendous, horrible and grim,
Tall as the oaks the forests grow,
Such stately height their bodies show,
And of proportioned breadth and length,
And limbs that showed not aught but strength.

Dread monsters these of ancient time
Ere man walked on this earthly clime,
Whose traces only here are found
Throughout creation's spacious round.
Lifelike through floods they seem to swim
And stretch afar each mighty limb.
On scenes like these the hero's gaze
Is fixed in astonishment, amaze,
But stranger sights shall meet his view
Ere he has searched those ice halls through,
And greater wonders of the olden time
Shall rise from out that realm of rime,
Wonders on earth forever lost,
Or found but in this realm of frost.
Onward they go through mighty caves
Formed out of high and sparkling waves
That yet retained their rolling forms,
As if they still were ruled by storms;
In ridges all the waves are tost,
As ere fettered by the wand of frost,
Each mighty trough and lofty crest
With sparkling wreaths of foam are drest.
So lifelike seem'd those waves to roll
Still look they 'neath the storm's control.
Fettered amidst the frozen flood
Were mighty forms of flesh and blood;
Many a shape well known to man,
And some his eye shall never scan.
Lions and bears and bulls and steeds
And all earth's beasts of varied breeds:
But not a trace was seen of man
Where'er the hero's gaze could scan.
What seem'd most resemble human kind

Midst all the wonders he could find
Were forms of long and snake-like plan,
Whose heads and faces looked like man ;
Two horns from every head arose,
And sharp, fell points those horns disclose,
Three eyes in every face were seen,
That dreadful glowed their horns between ;
Huge teeth in sharp and horrid rows
Did every open mouth diselose ;
But neither legs nor arms they bore,
And gleaming scales their bodies wore.
Though chained in ice and void of breath
Terrific looked those forms in death.
Each beast seem'd starting from his place,
War in his eye, war in his face,
And held aloft his scaly tail
In act to guard or foe assail.
Still onward through unnumbered caves
Form'd out of frozen floods and waves,
Midst wonders strange that eager twain
Explore and view the Polar main.
Surrounded by vast cliffs of ice,
Wide open seas their eyes entice,
Where rapid floods whirl round and round.
A maelstrom in its flow and sound ;
And while they here the waters scan
This speech the hoary guide began :
“ Back in the dim and distant past,
Ere the flight of centuries vast,
Beneath these wastes of ice and snow
The earth did fertile regions show,
Where science and the arts excelled,
And man a grand dominion held ;

Here vast and mighty cities rose,
And them did lofty walls enclose ;
Palaces, towers and marble halls,
Superb of structure, vast of walls ;
Gardens suspended high in air
That ever bloomed with verdure fair,
Where every tree and flower grew
That e'er the realm of nature knew,
Where fountains rose in columns tall,
Then arching fell, and showers fall
From them of gentle spray and rain
O'er all the gardens' fair domain.
Here war and peace their seasons knew,
And trade and commerce flourished too.
But sin and sloth and every crime
Yet brought unto these realms of time
Besieged the spirits of the race
That erst had god-like ruled the place,
And lured them onward to their doom
Swift as the wreck on the simoom.
Virtue was gone and sin was strong,
And all that did to vice belong.
Only those paths those mortals trod
That would offend and anger God.
Sudden as ever wild bird flew
From fowler's hand, a tempest grew ;
The noonday sun was hid from sight,
And all was draped in densest night.
As do yon roaring eddies run
The air around in whirlpools spun,
And sounds amidst the solid gloom
Around like ceaseless thunders boom.
But loud o'er these, terrific, fierce,

The shrieks of men the darkness pierce,
Cries of fear, distress and pain
Like roaring whirlwinds sweep amain,
And roars and growls from every beast
That ever yet on flesh did feast,
That ever loved the taste of blood
Or sucked from man his vital flood,
There, there to one grim carnage fly,
And men and women 'neath them die.
Every grim, devouring beast
On man or woman makes his feast.
Swift here and there for arms they fly,
Alas for them! no arms are nigh;
No weapons find they in the gloom
With which to stay awhile their doom.
To fly is death, to pause or wait
The same; the monsters' rage and hate
Is theirs alone; to ask of Fate
For mercy is too late, too late.
Children, men and women fall,
Devouring monsters swallow all,
Till o'er the nation's ample round
No likeness of a man is found.
Thus died they 'neath the hand of God,
And only beasts that country trod.
Sudden the face of all that land
Went sinking down, and o'er its strand
From marge to marge of this vast realm
The rising seas the whole o'erwhelm;
The floods in dread commotion flow,
And bury deep the realm below,
And every beast upon it found
Is midst the roaring billows drown'd.

While flow the surges broad and tall
The icy chains the billows thrall,
The Polar spirit o'er them crost
And froze them into solid frost.
And thus amidst this frozen flood
Were cast these forms of flesh and blood.
The souls of those the monsters slew
Far from the light of day withdrew ;
Forever thrall'd with grim despair,
Dwell in caves of intramundane air.
For ages did they dwell in pain,
For water, thirsting, shrieked amain,
Till God did them with pity view,
And half their woes from them withdrew ;
For them the solid globe He split,
And by them form'd a mighty pit ;
Down it these rushing waters flow
And drink to those poor souls bestow.
And here these floods shall onward rush
Till God shall all their fury hush,
And here these icy peaks shall stand
Eternal as the rocky land
Till He shall all of Nature change,
And all its atoms rearrange.
From whence these ceaseless waters flow
Man knows not and shall never know."

XIV.

He ceased, then towards a cavern dread
Of gleaming ice in haste they tread,
From whence a surging sound was sent,
As of vast angry waters pent.

And from the cave a hollow voice
Spake loud : " It has been our choice
And will and wish since time began
To live apart, alone from man,
And never tread the hated shore
That foot of man or woman bore.
We loathe, detest and scorn the breed
Of man, yes, every race and creed.
So what cause brings ye mortals here ?
Back, back to your own distant sphere,
Or feel the Polar spirits' might ! "

To this replied King Arthur's knight :
" I came to search these realms of ice
For Merlin's child, and twice, yes, thrice
All force that Polar spirits own
Shall by this arm be overthrown
But what from here the maid I'll bring
Unto the halls of Britain's king.
Merlin again his child shall see
In spite of all thy fiends and thee."

To this the hollow voice replied :
" Then let force her fate decide,
If from us she is sundered wide
Or here doth still with me abide."

Then from behind a wall of mist
That glow'd like sunlit amethyst
Broad and towering forms appear,
All armed with sword and axe and spear,
Grim weapons of enormous mass
And bright as sun-illumined glass.
Their forms are sheathed from head to heel
In icy mail more bright than steel,
And over all their helms of ice

Gleam'd lofty plumes of strange device.
Down on the knight in dread career
The foremost drove his massive spear,
Full on his shield he caught the blow,
Firm as a rock the mountains show ;
With such fell force that spear was sent
It on the shield to atoms went,
With flying splinters fill'd the air
And noises loud and grim and drear.
Swift as the speed of tropic storm
The knight sped at the mighty form,
Down on his helm the axe he drove
And helm and head asunder clove,
Nor stopped the axe at this, down far
It past, swift as a falling star ;
Through all the form in ice arrayed
Its way the gleaming weapon made.
Parted, the shape enormous falls,
With sound that deafens and appalls ;
Upon the icy floor it lies
And to a million atoms flies.
Then from the forms in icy mail
There burst a universal wail,
And cries of grief and rage and pain
Rose like the shrieking of the main
When spirits of the tropic storm
With foamy waves its floods deform
And all the wraiths to ocean known
Are into writhing anguish thrown.
Another form to combat came,
Swift moved the grim, enormous frame,
By grief and rage and hate impelled ;
High o'er his head an axe he held

Of weight immense and structure vast,
And bright as flame from furnace cast.
Down on the helm that Vulcan wrought
The mighty axe the demon brought ;
Unharmed the casque received the blow ;
The axe did into fragments go.
Nor to the blow the hero bends,
But swift on high his axe ascends,
Down on the fiend its edge he drives,
Another fiend asunder rives.
The riven form terrific falls
In splinters o'er those icy halls.
Another shape of mighty strength,
Dreadful in breadth as well as length,
Flaming with rage, his falchion drew,
And at the knight-like lightning flew.
Dread on the knight the sword descends
With crashing sound, like that when blends
The thunder's boom and earthquake's jar
And billows wash a rocky bar
And all the fiends of storm and blast
Their shriekings on the tempest cast.
Nor to the blows the hero reeled ;
On high he rear'd his shining shield,
And swift he made his mighty spear
Through his grim foeman's bosom tear.
Through gleaming mail the weapon tore,
Through heart and lungs and vital gore
And all that stood its path before,
Past through a yard behind and more.
Forth from the breast the spear he drew,
The horrid wound disclosed to view ;
Prone on the earth the demon fell,

With crashing sound and dying yell.
A thousand shapes in icy mail
With spears and swords the knight assail,
But vain is all the war they wage,
He quells their fury, force and rage;
In vain they close the hero round
With noise of shock and jars of sound;
Where e'er they charged, where e'er they drew,
His sword in flaming circles flew,
And fast their numbers smaller grew;
They waste away like morning dew
When on it like a gleaming lance
The splendors of the sun advance.
The strife is done, no moving foe
The whole vast cave of ice can show,
But far away o'er icy peaks
Is heard the flying foemen's shrieks
With savage curse and groan and yell
They fly o'er icy cliff and dell.

XV.

The cave the twain rove as they list,
Pass round the wall of gleaming mist,
And right behind this wondrous wall
There rose a small but gaudy hall;
Here on a couch in slumber laid
A form superb, a mortal maid.
Dark was her hair as is the night
When never planet shed its light;
Her comely face was sweet and fair
As ever fanned by vital air;
From crown to waist, from waist to feet,

The maid was loveliness complete.
Sheathed was the maid in icy mail,
And o'er her face was icy veil,
But so transparent was the sheath
It plainly showed the face beneath.
Beneath her couch the hero spies
A robe that there half hidden lies,
A robe such as might huntress wear
When she would in the chase appear.
Along her face his hand he drew
And from her face the ice veil threw,
From off her form the ice he broke,
And from her sleep Ursula woke.
Roused from the sleep that she had slept,
Which o'er her Polar fiends had kept
In spite of Merlin's prayers and tears
For full six hundred fleeting years,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Bewildered with a strange surprise,
Around her searching gaze she threw
On everything that met her view.
And soon again the maiden wore
The garb that she had worn of yore,
When on that distant, fatal day
She fell the Polar spirits' prey.

XVI.

All was accomplished, finished now
That Fate or force would there allow ;
No need to roam those realms of snow
And fight or chase the demon foe.
Back to the barge in eager haste

They journey o'er the frozen waste,
That gleamed far as the eye could view,
Where e'er the roaming vision drew,
In waving lustre, blinding bright
As sunlit slopes of chrysolite
The seaman sees with dazzled gaze
Far off on slopes of Greenland blaze.

XVII.

The barge is reached, and swift the three
With rapture leave the Polar sea ;
Some friendly spirit fills their sails
With ever-onward speeding gales ;
Some spirit the barge's keel below
Drives it more fleet than storm can blow.
O'er billows tall it makes its way
And round it flies the cool salt spray,
Which fills with mist the realms of space
And kissing laves Ursula's face.
On, on, in never-ending race,
Behind the billows vainly chase ;
Both wave and wind with all their speed
The barge doth thrice in flight outlead.
By frozen shores and icy isles,
Where scarcely e'er the sunlight smiles,
Where spirits of the Polar elime
Move grimly o'er the fields of rime,
Where all with white is overcast
By fleecy snow-flakes falling fast,
And high in air each spirit makes
A pathway of the falling flakes
And, like meteors of the night,

Descend with misty trails of light,
That far away through darkness sail,
White as a maiden's bridal veil,
While o'er the flying barge they throw
A pure, white robe of fleecy snow.
By frozen shores and icy isles
The wind the fleeting barge beguiles
To where a milder climate smiles,
And soon again on Britain's shore
The flying barge again they moor.

PART VI.

I.

As to the pier the barge was moor'd
O'er rippling seas the sun up soar'd,
And night with all its mists was hurl'd
In splendor from the sleeping world,
To highest realms of ether rose,
Where sunlight could its charms disclose,
And over all a glory throw
More bright than e'en the sun could show.
So seems on earth the mortal maid
When in virtue's charms arrayed,
When kind of heart and chaste of soul,
And pureness all her thoughts control,
She walks amidst the light of life
As either maiden, mother, wife;
No gloom that Fate can round her throw
But latent glory there shall glow
Soon as her sun, the soul of man
Shall rise and her pure heaven span;

The more of beams his spirit throws,
And sunlight to her soul bestows,
The more divine her nature glows,
And pureness from her spirit flows,
Till she shall far more dazzling glow
Than source whence all her glories flow,
Like sunlit clouds in distant space,
That far out-beam the sun's own face.
If e'er on earth was woman's soul
Where vicious passions held control,
Where envy, hatred, vice and sin
Ruled all her form and soul within,
'Twas man who thus her nature wrought,
And all her soul with vileness fraught;
Instead of light he darkness threw
Through all her soul, until it grew
Dark as the source from which it drew
All thought and feeling that it knew.
If not for him she would have stood
Sublime in virtue, chaste and good
As God at first made womanhood.

II.

The shore was reached and from the barge
The good knight bore his lovely charge,
Ursula, whose transcendent charms
Of yore had roused the world to arms;
Ursula, who to win as bride
Unnumbered knights in war had died;
The fairest maid of every clime
That Fate had seen since birth of time.
Wide as the morn its golden beams

Extends o'er space and hills and streams,
So wide o'er earth Ursula's fame
For beauty to all heroes came.
To isles remote and lands scarce known
The glories of her charms were blown ;
For beauty was the maid renowned
Where waters flowed or land was found,
Or where the voice of praise could sound,
And from all lands the world around
To Britain's shores the heroes drew
The all transcendent maid to view,
And her to woo and win as bride ;
And if to them the maid denied
Her love, then in the tourney grim
For her they'd risk both life and limb.
And oft for her transcendent charms
Unnumbered heroes died in arms ;
For her the earth was drenched with blood,
And was crimsoned many a flood.
But on one day the Fates decreed
That man should of the maid be freed.
A thousand knights in mail arrayed
In tourney stood for that fair maid ;
Nine hundred of those heroes bold
In death upon the earth were rolled ;
The rest were falling void of breath,
'Mongst steeds and heroes grim in death ;
And at the ghastly scene the while
Ursula gazes with a smile,
Nor raises once her hand nor breath
To stop the grisly work of death.
Two heroes of enormous frame,
Whose gleaming armor shone like flame,

Together in the tourney came.
Both kings for prowess wide renown'd
As ever yet on earth were crown'd,
Their glory did o'er earth redound
Where e'er a human voice was found,
Their prowess and their knightly worth
Was sung o'er all the spacious earth.
One came from out the Isle of Mist,
Where tempests wander as they list,
And clothe with foam the stormy seas
That thunder round the Hebrides.
'Twas said the hero drew his birth
From ocean wraith and genie of the earth,
Who embraced upon that stormy isle
While foam roared white for many a mile,
And that all daring of the storm and wave
They to the issue of their union gave.
The Storm King claimed him at his birth,
Reared him midst giants of the earth,
Fill'd his soul with prowess and with worth,
All knightly deeds that man can prize
Or favor find in woman's eyes;
And wheresoe'er the hero roam'd,
O'er land, o'er seas that slept or foam'd,
The Storm King ever round him dwelled
And from him every harm repelled;
Woe to the hand in peace or strife
At day or night should seek his life;
Though all unseen, the Storm King's arm
Was ever there to shield from harm;
Upon his mail the lance would speed
And shatter like a doated reed.
All vain at him was weapon flung

Who from the wraith and genic sprung.
Trenmor was the wondrous hero called
In tales and songs of bard and scald !
In a far distant, Northern isle,
Where half the year no sunbeams smile,
Where spirits of the Polar clime
Their orgies hold in halls of rime,
The other had been born and bred,
His life in toils of battle led.
From Thor, so ancient bards have sung,
And Polar nymph the hero sprung.
He was the fruit of their embrace,
And looked like both in form and face.
In mighty halls of frozen snow
The twain did Fate together throw.
Long dwelt they in those halls of ice,
For charms of each did each entice.
Fair was the nymph in form and face,
By Nature framed with every grace
That yet belonged to Beauty's race ;
Her form, though vast of size and tall,
Was harmony throughout it all ;
Her heaving breast and white, round arms
Were perfect all with beauty's charms ;
Her step was light as falling mist
That moves where e'er the sunbeams list,
Light as the snow of fleecy flake
Which falling none of sound doth make,
Nor doth at all the silence break
O'er the calm surface of a lake ;
Her eyes were as the ocean's blue,
Or like the heavens' azure hue.
But as two stars those eyes were bright,

The sheenest of a frosty night ;
Her cheeks were rosy as the morn
When sunlight in the east is born,
When snowy white and crimson hues
Their blending shades o'er skies infuse.
A being more by beauty blessed
Was never yet by man caressed.
From the union of this noble pair
The hero breathed man's vital air.
His mother reared him from his birth
To be a wonder of the earth ;
Him to all toils of battle bred,
His mind on themes of glory fed,
Planted through all his soul the seeds
That only grow to noble deeds.
But ere he unto manhood grew
Death the mother from the child withdrew,
Left him alone without a guide
To wander o'er the nations wide.
Yet still her wraith, the Fates decreed,
Should guard her son in time of need,
Should shield him from all hurt and harm
And aid him every foe disarm,
In strife all shock unscathed abide
And from it aye triumphant ride.
This was the tale that poets told
About this hero strong and bold.
Cormar by them this chief was named,
And o'er the world for prowess famed,
Where knighthood foremost honors claimed
And glory heroes' souls inflamed.

III.

With soul all fill'd with scorn and pride,
Where yet did pity ne'er abide,
The coming strife Ursular eyed.
But ere in fray the heroes met,
While spears were for the conflict set,
While yet three lances' lengths between
The closing kings did intervene,
Rigid as death each charger stood
Like statues hewn from stone or wood,
Nor for the goad of lance nor spur
From out his place would either stir;
The dead'ning power the heroes crost
And straight the kings all motions lost.

IV.

Sudden as gleams the flash of light
From clouds around the brow of night
A sable storm of dust and sand
Swell'd up and overwhelmed the land.
Darker than night the gloom o'erspread
The place around, while noises dread
As of the crumbling of a world
Were through the solid darkness hurl'd;
And came a voice, a voice sublime,
To which the tempests of all time
Together hoarded in one storm
Would but a low, frail whisper form,
Saying these words: "Thou soul of pride,
Whose heart was ne'er to love allied,
Whose soul no more of pity knows
Than rock that sleeps 'neath Sevo's snows,

Vile, worthless thing of scorn and pride,
For whom have countless heroes died
On stormy flood and reeking field,
This day thy doom, thy fate is sealed.
Six hundred weary years and more
Shalt thou be banished from this shore;
The Polar fiends shall thee possess,
Their icy arms shall thee caress,
They shall round thee frantic orgies hold,
And all their awful rites be told;
All fiends within those realms of ice
To thee thy beauty shall entice;
They'll round thee meet and cast the die,
And at its hazard all shall try;
As prize by one thou shalt be won,
Whom thou for ages shall not shun;
Thou shalt sleep upon his breast of snow,
And thy sleep shall none of ending know
Until a knight for deeds renown'd,
A hero of the Table Round,
If this the favoring fates decree,
Shall from thy slumbers set thee free
And bring thee back across the sea,
Where thou shalt yet a deed perform
In spite of demon, flood or storm
That shall for thee forgiveness win
Of half thy follies, pride and sin.''
Thus spake the voice, and, dreder still,
All space did booming noises fill
And deeper still the darkness grew,
Seem'd through the air dread demons flew;
The flutter of huge wings was heard,
Through all of space their flappings stirr'd.

A maiden's shriek rose on the air.
'Twas agony or grim despair,
But ne'er before a shriek so drear
Was ever knelled on human ear
Since earth with pain and woe was curst.
At this the solid gloom dispersed ;
Some power the noises straight benumb,
And every sound grows dead or dumb.
The gloom departs and sunlight gleams
Afresh o'er all the hills and streams ;
There on the tourney's ghastly field
Is seen the cloven helm and shield,
The earth with grisly corpses strown
And all the wreck of battle shown.
And there amidst the listed field
Was either haughty king revealed,
Silent as if all void of breath
Or chained within the clasp of death.
They still their mighty steeds bestride,
And view the place both far and wide,
But not a trace their eyes can find
Of that fair form of womankind ;
Like vision of a pleasing dream
That fades from sight with dazzling gleam
She'd sped, or like the rainbow's form
That vanishes amidst the storm.

V.

And never from that fatal day
The furies bore the maid away
Were either of those mighty kings
E'er seen in war or listed rings.
Back to their native isles they drew,

And never more of battles knew.
With peace and calm their realms they ruled ;
In peaceful ways their subjects schooled ;
Science and all the arts excelled
Where e'er their sway those monarchs held ;
The mighty energies of both
Gave justice everlasting growth ;
Discord and sloth and every crime
No foothold found in either clime ;
Wisdom and justice held the sway,
And fraud and wrong flew in dismay.
Each monarch lived an ample life,
Found fairer maid and fitter wife
Than her they'd sought in mortal strife
In listed field with carnage rife,
Where men and steeds in gore lay drown'd ;
But ever as the years flew round
Revolving brought that fatal day
The furies tore the maid away
To some lone cave would each repair,
Where none their grief could see or hear,
And past the dreary day in tears,
In fasting and in ceaseless prayers,
And prayed for the immortal weal
Of her who could no pity feel,
Within whose soul did naught abide
But cruel scorn and selfish pride.
If e'er the fates and furies cast
A pitying glance o'er all her past
And doom'd her to a milder fate,
Removed from her one-half their hate,
'Twas done amidst the flight of years
Through Trenmor's and through Cormar's prayers

VI.

And pity should the furies show
And less of hate the fates bestow
To one who from her early years
Had never known a mother's cares,
Who had been trained both soul and mind
Unlike the rest of human kind,
And scarcely ever from her birth
Had mingled with the race of earth,
But did alone with Merlin dwell,
For bards of her this story tell,
And bards are noted through all time
For telling truth, whate'er their rhyme.
They are of men the chosen few,
The fates hid nothing from their view,
The mists of all the ages past,
Dense around the centuries-cast,
They lift from off the distant years
And lo, the Past all bright appears.
Things buried deep in rayless night,
Fettered in oblivion quite,
From out the tomb they bring to light;
With life forgotten forms arise
And move on before our eyes.
Their mystic touch makes us behold
The deeds of centuries of old;
Realms, nations, races, cities rise,
All that in the Past deep buried lies.
And this strange tale of Merlin's child,
Whom they'd by name Ursula styled,
The bards have told : Cornar, a king
Whose deeds of old the poets sing,

Who by the prowess of his sword
In Wales won kingdom fair and broad,
And spread his fame o'er every land
Wide as the beams of morn expand
As wisest monarch yet enthroned,
A fair and lovely daughter own'd,
As lovely and as pure a maid
As ever nature yet surveyed.
Pure health did her fair features show,
And o'er them cast a ruddy glow,
Like sunshine thrown on virgin snow.
Mild in her manners and her mind,
By nature generous and kind,
She was the paragon of grace
And virtues of the female race.
Fiona, Cornar's lovely child,
Was known wherever morning smiled,
Where e'er the sun his lustre threw,
Where waters flowed or breezes blew.
Her with all blessings to assail
In naught did sturdy Nature fail,
With beauty's charms did she excell,
High-born was she and nurtured well;
Her pure young heart all virtues grace,
As Beauty's charms her form and face.
Though many a knight and prince and king
For prowess wide renown'd,
Whose deeds of chivalry did ring
The spacious world around,
Unto the lovely maiden paid
Their homage warm and true,
But Merlin won the rosy maid,
Left them her loss to rue.

The wisdom of the subtle seer,
His cunning and his art,
Had won the fairest of the fair
That heaved a human heart,
That ever breathed of earthly air,
Or yet to life did start,
That ever press'd a mortal bier,
Or did to death depart.

VII.

High on a ridge of woody hills
That looked o'er ocean's foam,
Adown whose slopes the crystal rills
With gentle murmurs roam,
And to the leafy summer trees
Eternal music ring
And send upon the gentle breeze
The happy songs they sing
And when, chained by freezing storms
'Neath winter's hand of frost,
Reveal a thousand fairy forms,
In which their floods are tost,
Dwelt Merlin and his lovely bride,
Fiona and her lord,
With every joy in nature wide
That Fate can man afford.
But ere two years had past away,
Upon one summer morn,
While flowers blossomed in fair array
And leaves the trees adorn,
With lips apart, with stirless heart
And pulses void of sound,

All void of breath and pale in death,
Was fair Fiona found.
And by her side an infant fair
In slumber lay and smiled,
Smiled on as if some angels there
With happy dreams its sleep beguiled.
As some lone wreath of spotless snow
That lingers in the vale
When springtide's gentle breezes blow
Along the greening dale,
And by the snow the violet grows
And breathes upon the gale,
So seemed that child that slept and smiled
By her, so cold and pale,
Who to her child had given birth,
Then past to other spheres.
And thus was found upon the earth
She who in after years
The bards Ursula styled by name
And whose transcendent charms
Sound ever on the roll of fame
Amidst the clash of arms,
Upon the fields of cloven shields,
Of shivered spear and sword,
O'er crimson flood of reeking blood
And carnage deep and broad.

VIII.

Secluded from all human kind
The crafty Merlin kept his child,
Reared her in nature and in mind
All haughty, scornful, reckless, wild;

Schooled her in all his craft and lore,
 In all his magic arts and spells,
Till she could all the wiles explore
 That in the wizard's stronghold dwells.
Whatever secrets knew the seer,
 Whatever charms o'er mortals threw
With all their force to wake man's fear,
 As well as he the maiden knew.
To make her fitter for the life
 A wizard maid should lead
He filled her soul and nature rife
With love of discord and of strife
 To never-ending greed ;
Taught her to hate the love of man
 And all his friendship scorn,
That 'twas to maids their surest ban
 Since first the race was born ;
If e'er to her a knight or king
 Should vows of love declare
To bid him in the listed ring
 With either brand or spear
Prove all the vows his tongue had spake
 And show his love was true,
Perform all deeds for her own sake
 That mortal king could do ;
And even then should they return,
 Not fall among the slain,
Their proffered love to ever spurn
 And treat them with disdain.
Though sweet her face as is the morn
When all the charms its birth adorn,
That yet in Beauty's realm were born,
 Or Beauty yet espied;

He fill'd her soul with hate and scorn
For all in nature wide.
Her heart was ne'er by pity torn,
No pity touched her pride,
And man, her blind and giddy fool,
She ever led astray,
Made him her victim and her tool,
Her worshipper alway.

IX.

Such was the maid the knight had brought
From out the realms of frost,
For whom the Polar fiends had fought
Till they their prize had lost.
And shall o'er him her will prevail?
Shall he beneath her fall?
Say, shall her charms his soul assail
And bind him with their thrall?
In vain on him her glance is cast;
Her charms are lost on him;
He heeds no smiles or lovely wiles
Nor grace of form and limb.
As sunbeam from the April skies
Upon the billows cast
That but a moment gleams, then dies
Amidst the waters vast,
So brief to him her charms arise,
Across his soul are past,
The pleasing vision from it flies
As leaf before the blast.

The sun was high and towards mid-day
The creeping shadows crawl
Ere they had made their weary way
Unto King Arthur's hall.

X.

The feast was spread and mirth and song
Re-echoed wild through Arthur's halls,
And ladies fair with heroes throng
From every land within those walls,
As there before both queen and king,
With all her radiant charms aglow,
The hoary guide and hero bring
Ursula from the land of snow.
Up springs each knight and hero there,
Bewildered with her witching charms;
Each swore to win the maiden fair
Or meet for her his death in arms.
They all arose within those walls,
Each baron, hero, king and lord,
Save he, the master of those halls,
Who spread that day the festive board.
He kept his seat and o'er the throng
A wily glance King Arthur threw,
And thought: "To me shall she belong
In spite of all that man can do,
For such a maid in life or song
Before did never mortal view."
But while his thoughts the mighty king
All secret in his bosom held,
And round eternal praises ring
Of her who all in charms excell'd,

And while from all the ladies there,
From every maiden, princess, queen,
At her the darting glances glare
Of jealous envy, hatred, spleen,
A slender maid, with feet as fleet
As spirit of the mountain caves
Or wraith the flying whirlwinds greet
At midnight on the racing waves,
Came in; to Arthur's side she drew,
In centre of those spacious walls.
A gory cross she lifts to view,
Then on the floor it broken falls;
From place to place its breaking flew
Like rolling thunders through those halls,
Through all the place a darkness grew
And wonder every soul enthalls;
Strange fear crept over every soul
That feasted round that festive board,
And while the deafening thunders roll
Each hero sought his shield and sword.
The thunders ceased and her frail form
To its full height the spirit drew,
Her tresses, dark as midnight storm,
From her fair face and brow she threw.
Straight with voice of clarion tone
That did like strange, weird music roll,
That rung through marrow, nerve and bone
And all the precincts of the soul,
She spake: "Ye potentates and kings,
Ye knights and chiefs of deathless names,
Whose praise across the wide earth rings
Bright as yet flashed the northern flames,

The Fates that guard your destiny
Have ordered me their herald here
To warn you of your jeopardy
That fast and dreadful gathers near.
The ships speed o'er the ocean's foam,
For miles they hide the flowing brine,
Led by Terentius of Rome,
The hoary Prophet of the Shrine;
Vast, dreadful are his gleaming spears
And dreadful is his warlike host,
And ere to-morrow's dawn appears
They'll surely land on Britain's coast.
So haste, ye kings and knights renown'd
For prowess and for daring worth,
Ye heroes of the Table Round,
Whose fame o'erspreads the spacious earth.
Back o'er the ocean's sounding wave
Drive them with slaughter and alarm.
Haste, knights of Christendom, and save
The cross from jeopardy and harm."

XI.

She ceased, and through the lofty halls
A deeper, denser darkness grew,
And every knight within those walls
Could scarce his comrade's features view.
As fast they searched for spear and brand,
For clanging armor, helm and shield,
And seized the first that came to hand
Where weapon sight or touch reveal'd,
Sudden as winds of morning rise
And drive the mists from off the hill,

And all around in grandeur rise
 Its bristling rocks in ridges still,
So swift the gloom from Arthur's halls
 Was by some unseen spirit fann'd,
And all within, from walls to walls,
 In gleaming mail his heroes stand ;
And with the gloom that left the place
 The mystic monitor had fled,
But there still scattered o'er its space
 The fragments of the cross were spread ;
From all its atoms flowed apace
 A reeking liquid gory red.
And midst those halls no more were seen
 Two forms that late did there abide,
Gone was Ursula's lovely mien,
 And gone the Jew, the hoary guide.
A dreary silence filled the place,
 Not e'en was heard the clang of steel,
Grimly each eyed his comrade's face,
 But not a word their thoughts reveal.
Nor was the ghastly silence broke
Till, rising, thus King Arthur spoke :
" Ye heroes of the Table Round,
The bravest of all nations found,
Who make such deeds your only choice
In which heroic souls rejoice,
Ye all have heard the solemn voice
That spake but now, whose words still sound
In deep, whispering echoes round,
And fill this castle's spacious bound.
Distinct that monitor I hear
As when her voice rung on my ear ;
The words she spake still onward roll

Through all the regions of my soul,
And though I can't foretell the doom
Of coming war, I see its gloom,
And with a faith deep-rooted, sure,
That ever shall in God endure,
That none of dangers, war or storm
Shall ever in my soul deform,
I shall all foes and dangers meet
As them a Christian knight should greet,
Nor ever fear nor know defeat
While pulses in my body beat.
Now straight let every warrior here
Around this table take his chair."
Swift at the word around the board
Was seated every knight and lord.
This done, again the king began :
" Say, is there 'mongst ye all a man
Who would the coming dangers shun,
And tamely see the land o'errun
By foreign foe? See rapine spread
Around where e'er the foe shall tread,
And he not lift his shield and brand
And give the realm a helping hand?
If such there be let him arise
And go where never danger flies."
He ceased, and long that monarch eyed
His knights with silent throes of pride,
For from his seat no warrior rose,
Each sat in grim and fix'd repose ;
In armor sheathed each kept his chair,
Like rows of rocks seemed rooted there.
Again the king the silence broke,
Thus to his list'ning warriors spoke :

“ Are there two heroes here who'll ride
With me and keep on either side,
And aid me stem the shock and brunt
And horrors of the battle's front ? ”
Scarce the sound of the last word slips
From out the mighty monarch's lips,
Than all around the spacious board
Up leapt each hero, knight and lord.
Like towers all of moving steel
A glorious sight those chiefs reveal
As, rising each from out his chair,
He lifts aloft his sword in air.
“ I'll go ! I'll go ! ” the loud words come,
And 'mongst them all no voice is dumb.

XII.

What mortal bard shall sing the theme
To limn the monarch's joy supreme
When near him, faithful, firm and true
In danger's hour, he comes to view
His trusty heroes round him throng,
Ready to die ere harm or wrong
Shall unto him or his befall,
Around him form a breakless wall ?
Bright as the glowing beams of morn
Sweet faith doth all his soul adorn,
His faith in them is rooted fast,
And when comes on the battle's blast
Triumphant o'er his foes he rides
Nor any foe his charge abides,
For at his back or at his side
His trusty warriors aye abide.

Where e'er he goes they take their way
Through all the wreck and shock of fray;
Their faith in him abideth pure,
And they of victory are sure;
To every toil their souls inure,
And for him every shock endure.

XIII.

Pride flashed from good King Arthur's eye
And gladness swelled his feelings high
As there he viewed of men a ring
As brave as ever circled king,
As bold of heart and strong of limb
As ever faced a battle grim!
Those chiefs their hands together bring
And swift around their gallant king
United move, a solid ring,
And as they move this song they sing:
"Where is the maid in nature found
Who never loved a knight renown'd,
Who never deemed his smile and kiss
And warm caress her chiefest bliss,
Would sooner lose her life, her all,
Than not his soul with love enthrall?
Where is the knight that breathes this air
Who loveth not a maiden fair,
The face bedewed with morning's charms,
The heaving breast and snowy arms,
Whose sweetest fruits of bliss are found
In her midst all the world around?
Where breathes the knight who would not wield
For her the sword on listed field,

To keep her from all harm and soil
Not lose his life in battle toil?
Where breathes the knight on spacious earth
Who loveth not his land of birth,
Who would not for her lift the shield
And ply his sword on battlefield
Till he had every foe o'ereome
Or he in death lay cold and dumb?
Who would not war and slaughter brave
The altars of his land to save
From hand of any mortal foe
That semblance of a man could show?
Who would not guard his father's grave
From foe's despoiling hand? Who'd wave
No gleaming sword in freedom's cause
And make through death grim tyrants pause?
A band of brothers we, who brave
For righteous deeds the gloomy grave.
Where waters run or breezes blow
For honor we will gladly go.
Where glows the sun in tropic clime
And simooms roar with strength sublime,
Upheave their storms of burning sand
Till they through all of space expand
And spread their wreck on every hand
Till quakes around the groaning land;
Where mountains vast their summits show
In panoply of endless snow,
And over them the ceaseless storm
Doth all in nature's realm deform;
Yes, thither we will gladly go,
And die or vanquish every foe.
No realm so wild, no land so rude,

But there our feet will dare intrude ;
No flood so wild, no sea so grim,
But o'er them we shall sail or swim.
No charm of seer nor wizard's spell
But what King Arthur's knights can quell
And send it back from earth to hell.
We burst the necromancer's wall
And beard him in his secret hall ;
The dread magician's force we break,
And make him swift the world forsake.
For Arthur we to war will ride
Wherever living foes abide ;
For knightly honor and for fame
And prowess we the world shall shame,
And through all coming ages we
Shall the true knights' pride and glory be ;
From race to race our fame shall last
Till hoary Time himself be past.
King Arthur's deeds and manly worth
Shall ever charm the sons of earth.
Speak but the word, oh, gallant king,
And we who round you form this ring
Would none of toil or peril shun
Till we the best had tried and done ! ”
Thus sang the hardy warrior throng,
With voices deep and loud and strong,
Until the shades of coming night
Were deepening o'er the mountain's height.
Then spake the king : “ The time has come ;
None must be idle or be dumb.
This night we all must spend in toil
If we the enemy would foil.
Haste, fire in the forges fling ;

To seething glow each furnace bring ;
Let stalwart arms the sledges swing,
And busy tongs and anvils ring ;
New armor make, the old repair,
And sharpen axe and sword and spear ;
Let each one toil as best he may,
And arm ye for the coming fray.
Let fires on the hills be made,
Their glow the gloom of night invade ;
'Twill call my allies to my aid,
For when on hills at night they glow
The allies of King Arthur know
They are the signals of distress,
And hither here they'll shortly press."

XIV.

Then swift on every mountain's head
There rose a glow of flaming red ;
From hill to hill with ruddy light
The beacons stream upon the night,
And over land and flowing stream
They glittered with redundant gleam,
And over all the sky was spread
A universal glow of red.
O'er England's hills the lights were seen
And over Scotland's mounts of green,
And every rocky hill in Wales
With glow the beacon's flame assails ;
Where e'er allies did Arthur own
His signals of distress were shown,
While far the signals of distress
Did earth and sky in brightness dress,

And over all a sheen was cast
Like that from out volcano's blast;
Around the blazing forges glowed,
And busy, toiling heroes showed;
Some at the bellows work amain,
While sweat and dust their features stain;
Some with tongs the metals turn
Midst flames that unto whiteness burn;
Some on the spacious anvils hold
The flaming metals, bright as gold,
While some on these the sledges swing,
Make metals and the anvil ring,
Send sparks of flame in circles round
That flash in air with glow profound,
And all the air with sounds is rife,
As if all noises and all life
That yet the busy world has known
Since first it into space was thrown
Were hoarded there that place within
And burst with all their life and din!
O'er hill and dell the sounds were flung
That from those busy toilers rung,
And all the air for miles around
Re-echoed with the blows of sound.
The helms they wrought and visors bright
That flashed around a gleaming light,
And breast-plates with a polished glow
Soon 'neath the busy toilers grow;
With blows of never-ending sound
They build the bucklers broad and round,
And all the plates of sounding steel
That sheathes a knight from head to heel,
All that a knight is wont to wear

When he'd on fighting fields appear,
And there some daring problems solve
That victory or death involve.
On wheels of stone, that swiftly turn
As windmills which the tempests spurn,
The ponderous axes, broad and sheen,
Are ground to edges lightning keen ;
The swords are whet and polished bright,
Made ready for the coming fight,
And every javelin and spear
Is formed a piercing point to wear ;
The bows they string with trusty thong,
And form the arrows sharp and long,
Feathered and tough and pointed strong ;
The slings to hurl the weighty stone
That breaks and crushes mail and bone
And speed the hissing rock through air
Complete they for the fray prepare.
While armor new the toilers wrought
And it unto perfection brought,
And from the old they burnt the rust
Which time had formed in scaly crust.
While it had idle hung on wall
For years neglected in the hall,
And while with care they scan the mail,
Drive firm a rivet or a nail
Where such is need, and far around
The place is rife with life and sound,
Furnaces flame and forges glow
And red-hot bars of metal show,
And busy men around them toil,
Whose strong limbs sweat and dust besoil,
And far away the beacons glow,

On every hill their fires show,
And over earth and heaven spread
A waving gleam of crimson red,
Bidding each baron, king and lord
That dwelt throughout those regions broad
Round Arthur's halls in haste to press
And aid him in his sore distress—
While this was passing, sheathed complete
In gleaming steel from head to feet,
And armed with buckler, spear and sword,
Alone through night rode Britain's lord ;
Past to a deep and woody vale,
Where rocks all sides the eye assail,
Soon gain'd a narrow, winding road
That horse-tracks up a mountain showed ;
On this the king his charger rein'd
And soon the mountain's summit gain'd
Far up as safe on steed to ride,
Then to a tree his steed he tied ;
High up a peak on foot he drew,
Where he could all the country view—
Its vales and hills, and far below
Could see where floods their ocean show,
And they were tinged with ruddy glow
By lights o'er them the beacons throw.
Well o'er the realm of flood and foam
The king could see the ships of Rome ;
Their stately masts and outstretched sails
Where e'er he looks his vision hails ;
He sees them reach his rocky coast
And from them pour their mighty host.
In arms they stalked along the beach
Far as the human eye could reach,

And well their shouts could Arthur's ear
Across the lonely distance hear;
The murmur of the songs they sung,
Sounds that from the clarions rung,
The din of gongs and bray of fife,
All blended, make a tumult rife,
Like that which comes on evening's breeze
When winds stir from their sleep the seas
And through a waste of waving trees
The all discordant music comes
And through the air eternal hums.
Around the monarch cast his view
Where on the hills the fires grew,
And well his piercing eye could see
Arising on the hilltops free
Each bright answering signal flame
That from his host of allies came;
Each, as in air its light was thrown,
He knew was answer to his own.
From hill to hill the answers rolled,
In every place his allies told
With tongues of fire, voice of flame,
They from their lofty strongholds came,
And soon with buckler, sword and spear,
His aids, would at his side appear.
And well he knew that when they came
Their ardor only death could tame,
And not a breathing Roman foe
The nation three days hence would show;
Unless the righteous God of all
Had different will'd, the foe should fall.
To heaven his face the king upturn'd,
With eyes that bright as starbeams burn'd

And soul that for the nation's weal
Yearn'd all as fervent and as leal
As e'er a soul in mortal man
Has yearn'd since humankind began.
And while he stood with face upraised
To Him who all his life he'd praised,
Had worshipped, honored and adored,
He thus began : " O Holy Lord,
Eternal God, incline Thine ear,
Thy humble servant's troubles hear ;
With pity look on all my woes,
And make me victor o'er my foes ;
Let me drive them from my native shore,
And crown with peace the realm once more ;
Let not their rude, insulting hand
Destroy my rule within this land.
I ask Thee not those foes to tame
With Thy own thunder and Thy flame,
To hurl on them a storm of death,
With pestilence to stop their breath,
No roaring tempests from on high,
With hurtling rocks to make them die,
While I stand idly by and see
The whole dread deed performed by Thee.
Of such of Thee no aid I ask ;
Let me alone perform the task,
Aided by those who this night bring
Their heroes to support their king.
Let us, O Lord, the deed perform
And be to them destroying storm ;
Keep good our courage, strength and breath
While we the foes shall smite with death,
For it has stood a truth sublime

Since Thou created man and time
That those Thy hand shall always aid
Who efforts first themselves have made
To help and succor their own cause,
Not pining, fretting, idly pause
Till Thou shall all their foes o'erthrow,
While they themselves no aid bestow.
No, no, O Lord, Thy will be done
Now as when first that will begun,
And ever still beyond all time
Thy will shall govern every clime;
All souls and all the starry spheres,
Whose end nowhere in space appears.
Thy arm to do no deed I'd ask
Were I not partner in the task.
This is all I crave of Thee, O Lord:
Keep good my breath, my strength and sword
And let me fight as I shall will
Till foes shall fly or slumber still.
Do this, O Lord, and men shall see
How dread in war this arm can be;
For strength in war the cliff of Fame
Will never show a brighter name;
For daring ne'er before espied
On me the sun shall smile with pride.
Do this for me, thou Lord of all,
Nor let me and my kingdom fall!
Guard well my breath, my strength and brain,
Nor let me call on Thee profane
When we shall joyous peace regain
And foes are beaten, fled or slain.
But when by me they are o'erthrown

No hatred shall by me be shown ;
I'll unto them such mercy show
I'd have them unto me bestow."

XV.

So pray'd the king, and from the place
He downward trod with hasty pace
To where a stately rock beside
Two moving figures he espied ;
One was a young and lovely maid
In flowing robes of white array'd,
One was a man well bent with years,
With feeble form and hoary hairs.
Right well the twain the monarch knew,
And unto them he swiftly drew,
And spake the king as he came near :
" What does so strange a couple here ?
Ursula, for what hast thou to-night
From out my castle ta'en thy flight
To wander in so drear a place
With cheeks of beauty, form of grace ?
And Simon, this place is damp for thee ;
Thou shouldst in my castle be,
Telling thy tales of travel strange,
For thou hast roam'd the world's broad range."
" Well hast thou spake," the Jew replied ;
" Here a strange couple doth abide
As e'er together man espied,
But, noble king, we came not here
Through thoughts of pleasure or of fear,
Nor any passion styled as love ;
These our thoughts are far above,

Nor is such thing within our creed.
We came here to arrange a deed
That we to-morrow must perform
If space is free of clouds and storm;
If the sun doth radiant glow
Naught shall these schemes and plans o'erthrow;
We, we the Roman fleet shall burn,
Its stateliness to ashes turn.
Laugh not in scorn, O noble king,
Nor think we cannot do such thing.
It will be done to-morrow sure
If no clouds from us the sun obscure
And he beams on us bright and pure.
Long time to me such deed was taught,
And I before such acts have wrought;
Archimedes this science knew,
And he a Roman fleet o'erthrew;
Through mirrors it to ruin gave,
And sank it 'neath the ocean's wave,
Where floods shores of Ortygia lave.
His fleet consumed like flaming fuse
Marcellus viewed at Syracuse.
Yon Roman fleet aflame shall be
Ere we to-morrow's noon shall see.
Behold, good king, these mirrors here,
Look o'er their bright and glossy sphere;
With these I could to flame awake
The waters of a frozen lake."
As thus he spoke he ranged arow
Nine mirrors, all of glossy glow,
With surfaces all clear and bright
That flash redundant, blinding light,
And o'er the hills strange shadows threw

That into dazzling brightness grew.
When this he did the hoary man
Unto the king again began :
“ I was old in years when rose the morn
That Christ upon the earth was born ;
My head with all its waving hairs
Was whitened with the rime of years.
Yet I am living, breathing now,
Look just the same in face and brow,
In form and every outward show
As in those centuries ago.
In me there is at all no change,
No matter where o'er earth I range ;
No matter where I move or go
In me no changes ever show.
It seems that I am curst with life
That shall no ending know, no strife
Cut ever short, till Christ again
Shall tread this world of woe and pain
And unto me an ending give.
It is an awful thing to live
Such weary centuries of time,
An outcast tost from clime to clime,
A curse upon the earth's broad face,
Estranged from all the human race,
To roam like air from land to land,
From sea to sea, from strand to strand,
And never aught but travel know.
On earth my limbs no shadows throw,
And when I list no mortal man
My presence at his side can scan.
See here, this cloak I'll cast aside
That seems a mortal form to hide,

But when from me the cloak I cast
We both from mortal sight have past;
'Tis only when this cloak I wear
That I to mortal sight appear;
The instant that it leaves my form
Swift as the lightning of the storm
We both invisible become,
And every gazer's voice is dumb
If asked where we so sudden flew."
As this he said his cloak he drew
Aside, and straight was lost to view.
The cloak and man were lost to sight,
Seem'd melted into air outright;
No slightest trace was left behind
To either man or garment find.

XVI.

A moment past, and lo, the Jew
Grew in the air distinct to view;
Sudden as he had ta'en his flight
Again he stood before their sight,
The same old, bent and hoary man,
And thus again his voice began.
" You see how swift from mortal gaze
I start and back to it can raise,
Am lost to sight or stand in view.
This I've had the power to do
Ever since that sad, fatal day
When, midst uproar and grim dismay,
For sin of man the Saviour died,
Upon the cross was crucified.
I stood amidst the crowd that day,

And as by me Christ took His way,
Bearing His heavy cross along,
Bleeding from blows of lash and thong
From head and form and every limb
With which the rabble smote on Him.
And while His bare feet, bruised and torn
On path of cutting stone and thorn,
Were oozing crimson forth amain,
Marking His path with gory stain,
Right close by me the Saviour past ;
As this He did my gaze I cast
Full in His eyes and then apace
Three times I smote Him on His face,
Saying to Him as this I did
' Why tarry here? Hasten Thee and rid
Thee of Thy pains and mortal breath ;
Or dost Thou fear to meet Thy death ? '
As Him thus with voice and hand I spurned
On me His gaze the Saviour turned
And calmly said : ' Simon, here remain
Till I to earth shall come again.'
And here on earth I have remained,
By Time and even Death disdained.
Time makes in me no slightest change
As o'er their path the centuries range
And make all else on earth grow strange ;
The same frail form and wrinkled brow
I had that day I still have now.
Like lonely waif on restless seas,
The prey of waves and storm and breeze,
I roam alone from place to place
And mix with every creed and race,
For every tongue of every land,

And speech, I speak and understand.
Yet all the dreary time my soul
So lonely is, so thrall'd with dole
And wretchedness, it seems to me
That God doth never with us be.
But what to me doth strangest seem
Of all, and haunt me like a dream,
Is this: The day I smote the Lord
A pain as from a thrust of sword
That instant shot through all my hand
And withered it; as here I stand
That thrill of pain unceasing goes,
And never any respite knows;
Since that fatal day this hand received
The shock it's never been relieved;
Eternal as my years remain,
So lasting seems this throe of pain;
To ease it this world's balms are vain
Till Christ shall walk on earth again,
And then perhaps I shall fulfill
My destiny of pain and ill,
No longer o'er the earth repair
From clime to clime, like moving air,
But in the grave that rest obtain
That nature gives to mortal pain,
Lie down with Death in calm repose,
Oblivious to human woes,
In peaceful company with those
I loved and lost in early years
And wept for with my mortal tears,
Who did for me all friendship show
That in the hearts of mortals glow,
Whose souls were true in weal or woe,

Who died long centuries ago.
Oh, shortly may the day arrive
That I shall be no more alive,
That Christ shall walk the earth once more,
But not be treated as of yore.
Now, hero, king, my tale is told ;
In me the Wandering Jew behold,
And when to God your prayers you make
Ask Him to pity, mercy take
On this old man, for mercy's sake ;
Though he is curst, not make that curse
Eternal as the universe,
Nor let His anger for my crime
Last through all centuries of time,
But let it please His will benign
To me a different fate assign,
Give to me a happier state,
For my repentance has been great.
Do this for me, O gallant king,
Aid me my woes to ending bring,
For prayer when by the righteous made
Will sure the ear of God invade ;
With God men's prayers avail far more
Than dream'd of on this mortal shore.
And I for you a deed shall do
Ere we to-morrow's noon shall view
That shall o'erwhelm the Roman fleet
With grim disaster all complete.
But to your halls I now must go,
What's passing there I fain would know ;
There I must seek for Beau De Main
And others of your knightly strain,
Array them for the coming fray,

To which I mean to lead the way.
To-morrow will be battle day
Grim as did e'er the sun survey !”
As this he said the hoary Jew
Was instant lost to Arthur's view ;
Around he gazed, but sight or sound
Of that strange man he nowhere found.

XVII.

To catch the cooling breeze of night
His gleaming helm and visor bright
The hero drew from off their place
And bared his comely head and face.
His ruddy cheeks the hues of morn
With all their healthy tints adorn ;
Clean rows of white and pearly teeth
His hairy lips display beneath ;
And from beneath as manly brow
As nature ever made till now
Shone his clear eyes, and of that hue
Seen in the skies, a living blue,
Which showed a spirit brave and true,
Whom friends could trust and foemen rue ;
And o'er his head his yellow hair
Grew luxuriant on its lair.
And ne'er before through all her past
Ursula e'er her gaze had cast
Upon as comely, noble face,
Such manly harmony and grace
And if that maiden never knew
For man that came within her view
One ray of love, she must have felt

It then, her icy spirit melt,
For to the king she swiftly drew,
On him cast a lingering view,
While blushes all her face o'erspread
More sweet than ever morning shed ;
Her arms around his neck she threw
And to his lips with kisses grew,
Pressed warm on his her ruby mouth,
Like rosebud of the Sunny South,
The fairest yet that ever grew
On green or felt the morning dew,
And said : " Six hundred years have past
Since I on Trenmor looked my last,
And knew I not right well that he
No more on earth doth living be,
I'd claim thee as that hero now,
Thine is his face and manly brow."
Then to the king the maiden told
About the tourneys waged of old,
How mighty hero, prince and king
Did unto her their homage bring,
And how, to win earth's fairest prize,
Kings fought and died before her eyes !
To which King Arthur swift replied :
" Had I been there I too had tried
To favor find within thine eyes
And with my lance have won the prize,
For fairer maid was never seen
And never trod on nature's green.
In thee are all the graces rife
That ever Beauty woke to life,
And through all ages shall thy name
Blaze brightest on the cliffs of fame

As earth's fairest, loveliest maid
For whom e'er hero drew his blade,
Or king or knight or prince or peer
Has e'er in battle couched a spear."
The monarch ceased, and blushes red
The lovely maiden's face o'erspread ;
Within his arms she dropped her head,
While he her lips with kisses fed
Oh, blame him not, ye righteous souls
Who dwell within earth's spacious poles,
Whose self-deem'd virtue knows no sin,
Though all's uncleanness within,
If he while she lay in his arms
Forgot Guinever's lovely charms,
And he his vows of wedlock broke
Ere on the hills the morning woke ;
Condemn him not, ye righteous old,
Whose natures have through years grown cold.
Who through the feebleness of age
No more in lusts of flesh engage,
Who frown austere and madly scold
At things they did ere grown too old ;
The hoary and the toothless crone,
Who's little more than skin and bone ;
The preacher with the frosted head,
With all his youthful fires dead ;
The maid who never did a sin,
Whose soul for lust no force shall win,
But harbors much strange thought within,
Are all too prone to evil think
Of those who seem upon the brink
Of doing mortal sin ; 'twere well
If nobler thoughts would in them dwell,

And think less of their neighbors' deeds,
Though noxious all as poisoned weeds.
Or yet the youthful preachers whom
Fate to no sin shall ever doom,
At least they broadly tell us so,
And none like them with virtues glow,
But when they think they are unseen
Of those who view their actions keen
We much in them will find unclean.
Their velvet words and silken speech
Oft more of crimes than virtues teach,
'Cause they don't practice what they preach.
They wall their many virtues round
As chestnuts in their hulls are bound,
A thousand thorns as sharp as spurs
Keep them secure within their burs ;
But oft the burs that seem the best,
To largest, soundest nuts invest,
When opened all the fruit is found
Worm-eaten, worthless and unsound.
How fared till morn the maid and king
It is not for this bard to sing ;
Mine is a tale of Arthur's time,
No history of love or crime.
But let no mortal of this earth,
Whate'er his station, rank or birth,
E'er cast the slightest taint of shame,
Dishonor on a maiden's fame.
It's like the delicate dust that clings
Unto the butterfly's bright wings,
The slightest touch will break away
The source that gave it glory's ray,
The bruised and wounded wing, no more

Shall fly with beauty as before ;
On earth the insect falls and lies
Till it from pain and anguish dies.
Before I'm done this much I'll say :
The maid was fair, the king was gay ;
Each for the other breathed with charms,
And these are Love's and Cupid's arms,
The strong morion, spear and shield
With which Love ever wins the field,
And never knight or maiden met
Whose beauty either soul beset
But what an easy fray was fought
And sweetly to an ending brought.
When once a maiden gives her ear
The wooing of a knight to hear,
If he, indeed, a true knight be,
Then soon victorious is he ;
It's as Nature from the first decreed,
And is in every race and breed.
And when the maiden's love is won
Then glitter's Joy's ascending sun ;
No clouds the glowing beams obscure,
All while the loves of both endure.
We may bright virtue's throne o'erthrow,
But what trophies can the conquest show
To recompense the pain and woe
That victor and vanquished know,
When, with meditative soul and thought,
They contemplate the ruin wrought,
And know they can rebuild no more
The structure with its grace of yore ?
A moment's folly may deface
A life that erst was perfect grace,

And leave behind a tarnish there
Shall never wholly disappear;
No matter what the arts devised
To keep those blemishes disguised,
All follies and all sins that we
Commit while in this life we be
Glow like the flames on mountains high,
That blaze to every mortal eye.
None fail to see the glowing light,
How fair the day or dark the night;
While all our virtues, pure and sheen,
By mortal eyes are never seen,
Though they be bright as is the sun
When o'er his disk no clouds are run,
Or like electric beacons glow
On mountain tops, that dazzling throw
Their fadeless lustre far and wide,
Which can no night or darkness hide,
They're seen by mortal eyes no more
Than pearls on ocean's deepest floor.
And if the bright Ursula's ear
Did wooing of King Arthur hear,
And learned to love him more and more,
It past as wooings have before.
The bravest knight in listed field,
That ever lifted brand or shield,
Will, vanquished, unto beauty yield,
Become her willing serf and slave,
Her football, if the beauty crave.
The braver is the knight in arms,
And midst all dangers and alarms,
Easier the prey to beauty's charms.

PART VII.

I.

Amidst the East the coming day
Has sprinkled all the sky with gray ;
The lark from his high treetop springs,
And flaps in air his dewy wings,
Hails with his small throat the coming beam
And sips with joy the mountain stream ;
The roe leaps from his lonely lair,
And, bounding, snuffs the morning air ;
Aloud in space the small birds sing,
And make the woods with music ring.
Afar o'er wold and field and hill
The haughty steed neighs, loud and shrill,
Paws fast the earth and pricks his ears
To all he sees, to all he hears,
Hails with delight the rising day,
And snuffs afar the coming fray ;
Where e'er he looks around appear
A forest bright of moving spears ;
The gleam of arms and bossy shields
He sees afar o'er hills and fields,
Sees how Arthur's knights to battle file
When danger threatens Britain's isle.
With steady footsteps, swift and strong,
In silence speed the hosts along ;
No fife nor trumpet breathed a sound,
Nor clarion break the stillness round ;
Save heavy tread and clash of steel
The hosts no other sounds reveal,

And those the neighing chargers gave,
And scarce the winds their banners wave:
Each drooping from its staff appears
O'er gleaming steel and bristling spears.
And far to left and far to right,
Wherever roams the searching sight,
The hills and glens and fields reveal
The moving ranks of British steel,
Or those the trusty allies bring
To aid the cause of Britain's king.

II.

Sheen as the flame the furnace shows
When 'neath the bellows' blast it glows,
And far its blinding lustre throws,
From out the East the sun uprose;
Above the hills his beam uprears,
And 'neath his light the world appears.
Then all that host of bristling spears
A gleaming, blinding splendor wears;
Far to left and far to right,
In moving rows of burnished light,
And ridges deep, the marshalled lines
The splendor of the sun outshines.
And there amidst those ranks appear
The boldest that the earth could rear,
Each haughty baron, knight and lord
That dwelt throughout the nation broad,
And every knight and king renowned
Belonged unto the Table Round.
All those who dwelt amidst the isles,
Where foam roars round for many miles,

And aye through mist the morning smiles,
Were seen amidst those gleaming files :
There were the heroes Bors and Ban,
Sir Launcelot and Dinadan ;
Sir Tristram there, and Pellinore,
Balin and haughty Lanceor,
Balan and death-defying Tor.
Why should I name the heroes o'er ?
There all the knights and chiefs were found
That knew and prized the Table Round ;
And those who more of them would know
Their lives will Arthur's annals show :
Go read the tales by night or day,
They'll well the time and toil repay.
Yes, every knight and chief was there
Who that day breathed the vital air,
Who were not weak with hoary age,
And could in battle toils engage.
Where to and fro the standards reel
Above a sea of moving steel,
Where forests gleam of bristling spears,
A giant form in mail appears.
Like shining column, broad and tall,
He stood, the tallest of them all ;
And, like the sun, his beaming shield
Shot splendor over hill and field ;
Lustre from his morion came
As from some peak of waving flame.
So looked amidst the martial strain
The daring hero, Beau de Main,
Sheathed in the mail that Vulcan wrought,
Its shine all eyes of heroes caught ;
With wonder all the hosts behold

Its gleaming plates of steel and gold.
But foremost of that vast array,
Where sunbeams over armor play,
And shoots around a sea of light
Too blinding for the human sight,
Leading to war his own bright wing,
Rode daring Arthur, Britain's king.

III.

Meanwhile in arms the Roman host
Were marshalled grim along the coast,
Bright as a sea of rolling flame
Along the land they marching came ;
Their casques a burnished lustre threw
'Neath waving plumes of every hue.
There shone the axe and lance and shield,
All weapons used on battle-field,
And some unknown to Britain's king
From Rome these fierce invaders bring.
High on a charger black as night,
All sheathed in armor ruddy bright,
Which over all its form was spread
And clothed the steed from tail to head,
Leading his foremost battle-line,
Rode on the Prophet of the Shrine.
No mail the hoary hero wore,
A shield and sword were all he bore,
And with voice like clarion strong
He led his shouting hosts along
Where to and fro the banners reel
Above a moving sea of steel,
Where sounds the maddening war-horn's peal

And fife and gong their sounds reveal,
Where heavy tread and armor's clang
Upon the air terrific rang
And fill'd all air with tumult rife,
Such as is known to coming strife.

IV.

The hosts have met in battle shock,
And to and fro they reel and rock,
Like billows of a raging main
 When by contending tempests stirr'd,
That rise and fall and rise again,
And clash and roar and tug and strain
 And all the rocks with foam-wreaths gird,
While all the wraiths of ocean howl
Amidst the tempest's deep'ning scowl.
A thousand swords have left their sheaths,
 A thousand blades are bare,
A thousand swords are flashing bright
In hands of hero, king and knight
 Who well can dangers dare,
And in and out they ride about
 The Roman cohorts there,
With death or rout they quell the shout
 Of Roman knight and peer.
As the loud din the forge within
 When anvils rock and ring,
When fusing steel the sledges feel
 That stalwart toilers swing,
Such is the noise that there destroys
 The peace of morning air,
And all around is heard the sound
 Of breaking sword and spear,

The clash of arms and dread alarms
That from that battle rise,
The shriek and groan to conflict known
When hero falls and dies,
Or falls in dust from blow or thrust
And 'neath the charger lies.

V.

The clouds of dust rise up amain
And roll athwart the battle-plain,
And swarth in clouds of rolling gloom
The armies, banner, spear and plume.
But while amidst the dust they reel
Unceasing roars the clash of steel,
On casques the sounding axes ring
And echoes far and wide they fling,
And clanging blows on sounding shields
Roar over all the battle-fields,
Dread noises from the roaring strife
Fill all the air with tumult rife.
The rising winds of morning blow,
Aside the shrouds of battle throw;
And far to right and far to left,
Where winds the folds of gloom have cleft,
Are seen the lines of broadswords bright
That rise and fall amidst the fight,
The axes with their edges keen
That fast descend like lightning's sheen,
While over all the scene appears
The flying shafts and hissing spears,
The stones that from the slings repair

And hissing fill at times the air
And deal destruction o'er the fields
And break at times the serried shields ;
Long arrays of morions bright
That beam amidst the battle's night
Like ridges seem of waving flame,
And could light of meteors shame.
Such sights the rolling battle shows
Whene'er the breeze of morning blows,
Aside the gloom of battle throws
That from the earth eternal grows,
As to and fro in battle shock
The struggling armies reel and rock
With all their will and strength and breath,
Increase the ghastly work of death.

VI.

'Tis now well nigh the noon of day,
Yet still unceasing roars the fray ;
In vain King Arthur's heroes toil,
With foeman's blood bedew the soil ;
Still, still the Romans crowd around,
Fresh columns throng the gory ground ;
At every turn and sight and sound
Fresh swarms of Roman knights are found.
Side by side, small space between,
Arthur and Beau de Main are seen.
On foot the mighty heroes toil,
And with grim carnage dye the soil ;
With serried shields they bide the brunt
And shock of half that battle's front ;
With their good swords their path they hew

Where e'er the Romans rise to view,
Through helms and heads their swords descend,
And thus the lives of hundreds end ;
Where e'er the battle dreadest grows,
Where thickest swarm the hosts of foes,
Their flaming swords the heroes wield
And hurl to earth both man and shield.
In vain 'gainst them the Romans sweep
With serried shields in columns deep ;
In vain they rush in swift career
And hurl at them the gleaming spear ;
In vain they hurl the weighty stone
That crushes other mail and bone ;
All weapons that they own are vain
To hurt or harm that mighty twain,
Whose swords descending sweep their ranks
And make in them wide, ghastly blanks,
Who clothe the earth with Roman blood
And crimson it with reeking flood,
Who mark their tracks where e'er they go
With ghastly lines of slaughtered foe,
Morion cleft and broken shield,
And all the arms that heroes wield
When striving on the battle-field ;
Yet still the foemen do not yield,
But onward, onward, crowd amain
And battle wage against the twain,
Those chiefs for prowess wide renown'd,
Those heroes of the Table Round.

VII.

What lights are those that flash on high
And shoot their glow across the sky?
Whose sheen e'en makes the noonday's sun
Burn with a brightness dim and dun?
What lights are they? On yonder hill
They rise and half of space they fill;
Across that wide expanse of land
Between that hill and ocean's strand
Those steady shafts of light descend
As towards the sea those streamers wend;
They fast together nearer tend,
And all in one sheen point they end;
And full upon the Roman fleet
It fast descends with glowing heat.
A moment past, no more, and flame
O'er all that fleet fast rushing came;
The fanning winds that moment rise,
From ship to ship the fire flies
In one vast column, broad and red,
O'er all the fleet the flames outspread;
O'er sails, and spars, and stately masts
Terrific sweep the flaming blasts.
From ship to ship the whirling flame
With horrid sounds and colors came;
Each deck and hull the flame receives,
And each burns on like withered leaves,
Or like dry grass the flame consumes
When wild o'er it the tempest fumes.
Down, down unto their water line,
To where they touched the azure brine,
Those stately ships the flames consume.

And them to utter ruin doom.
Such was the end that fate decreed
That fleet, and those who did the deed
Shall live in story and in tale
Till hoary Time himself shall fail.
Ursula and the deathless Jew
Shall live in story old and new ;
Sire to son the tale shall go,
And races yet unborn shall know
How they their subtle skill employed,
And they the Roman fleet destroyed.

VIII.

With terror wild the Romans view
Their fleet that swift to ruin drew ;
To save that fleet in vain they fly,
To quench those flames in vain they try,
In vain they cast huge streams of brine,
The flames still broader, brighter shine ;
A hoarse and sturdy Western breeze
To tossing foam had chafed the seas,
And this stirr'd up the eager flame
Till all a roaring blaze became ;
And, in spite of all that man could do,
The circling flames their way pursue.
Wrapt hulls and masts, and shrouds and sails,
Till everywhere the flame prevails,
Till universal ruin spread
In smoke and conflagration dread
O'er all that fleet, in embers red
And ashes sank to ocean's bed,
And ocean's azure curtains close

Above its lasting, deep repose,
Left not a trace along that shore
To tell where it had been of yore.

IX.

Along the hills the day declines,
O'er them the slanting sunbeam shines,
And far away their summits tall
O'er earth in lengthening shadows crawl.
On, onward, wider, longer still
Creeps forth the shadow of each hill;
The trees increasing dimness wear,
Till all with somber shades appear,
And gloom of night comes falling fast,
O'er all her misty mantles cast.
Yet still the battle roars amain
And heroes die to glory gain.
From right to left, from left to right,
Terrific rolls the waves of fight;
Now Arthur's knights advantage gain,
On all sides rout the foe amain,
Pursue o'er fields the Roman hordes
With gory spears and dripping swords;
When sudden, swift as waves turn back
When met upon the tempest's track,
Returning come in grim array
And fill the air with blinding spray,
So sudden and so swift their ranks
The Romans turn, their broken flanks
Repair apace, and form their van
With serried shields and man to man,
While to and fro their standards reel

And round their maddening war-horns peal,
On comes their hurricane of steel
To death and grisly ruin deal.
So fought the hosts upon that field,
Nor one could make the other yield;
Where one advantage lost they fought
Till it with blood they back had bought,
Nor heeded they the loss of life,
So they were victors in the strife;
On fought they till their latest breath,
And piled a grisly mound of death.
Though dread his sword King Arthur plied,
And he who battled at his side,
And 'neath them dread the carnage grew
As ever field of battle knew,
Yet still the waste of life seem'd vain,
Still round the foemen closed amain,
And hard and swift their blows they rain
Upon the grim, destroying twain.
In vain the Prophet of the Shrine
Urges to strife each serried line,
In vain he forms his mighty horde
In ridgy columns deep and broad,
In vain he forms in hollow squares,
They're broken by the British spears;
In vain they into phalanx move,
Its strength the Saxons swiftly prove,
O'er it the knights terrific ride
In dust and gore tramp down its pride;
In vain he every tactic proves
That in the sphere of battle moves;
His knowledge and his tactics fail
To make the Britons fly or quail.

X.

A sable night had gathered in,
Yet still was heard the battle's din;
O'er hill and glen and lonely wold
The distant sounds of conflict rolled,
And not till sable gloom had grown
And inky night o'er all was thrown
The king the well-known signal gave
That stops the toil that fills the grave;
And not till then his heroes cease
The work that gives the night to peace,
And slowly from the field of fight
His ranks retire for the night,
Seek food and drink and rest, repose,
What toil to weary nature owes.
And from that dreary field of toil,
Where reeking blood bedews the soil,
The hoary Prophet of the Shrine
Brings from the field each Roman line;
Beside the ocean's sounding coast
He leads the remnant of his host
For drink and food and sleep and rest,
Those things that soothe us mortals best,
And soon around both friends and foes
Seem lying in a deep repose.

XI.

A voice comes unto our ears
Sad as the sounds of other years;
It rises on the winds of night
From whence is seen yon feeble light
Watch-fires cast upon the gloom,

Hard by a mossy, ancient tomb ;
And there some human forms appear
Whose faces dole and sorrow wear,
And there upon the gory green
A wounded maiden knight is seen.
Beside her, bow'd with grief and pain,
With eyes of woe, is Beau de Main ;
And at her side King Arthur bends.
With balms her ghastly wound he tends,
And strives to stop its gory flow,
But vain all skill that he can show,
The gory tide still flows amain,
And dyes her form with crimson stain.
A weakness all her sense benumbs,
And to it all her strength succumbs ;
But ere the vital spark was flown
She thus her dying thoughts made known :
“ When all had left King Arthur's hall,
To battle summon'd at his call,
From off the walls these arms I drew,
And sheathed myself as here you view,
And here, disguised, to war I came,
For love of country, not for fame ;
To give my life to freedom's cause,
And not at all for man's applause.
The hoary Jew to me had told
There was a prophecy of old
To this effect: A Roman host
Should some day land on Britain's coast,
By Terentius Arlus led,
One fierce as ever battles bred,
And styled by some of mortal line
The sacred Prophet of the Shrine ;
And he, with fire, blood and sword,
Should ruin spread o'er Britain broad ;

Him none should e'er o'ereome in fight,
Whate'er their skill, whate'er their might,
Except the hand of maiden knight.
Her force should o'erthrow him quite,
Her spear should pierce his bossy shield,
His breast to it should passage yield;
Then she a flaming sword should wield,
And leave him headless on the field.
Then would the woes of Britain cease,
And reign again a lasting peace.
For this alone to war I came,
'Twas for my country, not for fame;
But when I reached this field the sun
His daily course had almost run;
I found behind a serried line
Of shields the Prophet of the Shrine.
Upon that ridge of blazing steel
I charged and made it backward reel;
Its best on earth I breathless laid,
And had almost a passage made
Through all that ridge's gleaming line
Right to the Prophet of the Shrine,
When on my helm a hissing stone
Was hurl'd, and I to earth was thrown,
With shattered casque and bleeding brow,
As here you see me lying now.
May be some maid will do the deed
Stern fate has not for me decreed.
Oh! may she quell the tyrant's breath,
And swift avenge Clotilda's death,
And all the nation's griefs and woes."
She ceased, and into dread repose
Her lovely voice sank ever more;
A snow-white hue her visage wore,
Her ashy lips revealed beneath

Her still more white and pearly teeth.
The king her eyelids gently closed,
And viewed the face that there reposed ;
There long and steadfastly he gazed
Upon that silent face upraised,
That looked so calm and sweet it seemed
She only slept and happy dreamed.
Her lily hands lay on her breast,
As white as snow, in endless rest ;
With gory stains her tresses bright
Waved sadly in the breeze of night,
A rigidity her form o'erspread,
And Clotilda numbered with the dead.
Soft pity touched the monarch's soul,
His tears in secret silence roll,
Adown his face apace they flow,
And heaves his breast with manly woe.
With spirit racked with dole and pain
Beside her silent sat De Main,
A gloomy monument of grief.
No tears would give his woe relief ;
No soothing drops for him would roll
To ease pent floods within his soul,
That surged and swell'd beyond control.
He silent sat and steadfast gazed
Upon the pale, sweet face upraised
In speechless lethargy of woe ;
Died out the frail, flickering glow
The dim watch fires round them threw,
And night obscured her from their view ;
And there, amidst the solid gloom,
She lay all hid as in the tomb.
But still that knight beside her bowed
His head, still as a corse in shroud,
And nothing more of action proved.

At length by sudden feeling moved
Her pale, still lips to his he pressed,
A moment's space her form caress'd,
Then left her to eternal rest,
And with the king he bent his way
Where less of gloom around him lay.

XII.

They reached the tent of Pellinore,
Who feasting sat his board before.
Wide was the tent and long the place,
A hundred knights might there find space
To feast, or drink, or dance, or rest,
As there might suit their natures best.
With goblet fill'd with ruddy wine,
That did like liquid amber shine,
At head of his wide, ample board,
That well with healthy food was stored,
In fixed contentment sat the king.
At times his mirth would loudly ring
In fits of laughter, deep and long,
At jests from those who, feasting, throng
Around that gay and festive board ;
For in there sat many a lord
And knight for prowess known abroad,
Heroes for courtesy renown'd,
All warriors of the Table Round.
So Pellinore, with constant smile,
Look'd happy, feasting there the while.
Tall was his form, and deep and broad,
And limbs with frame did well accord ;
Each spacious hand and giant limb
Showed him in war a foeman grim,
And over all his face appeared

A thick and just as red a beard
As ever yet the dye of blood
Has tinged the earth or rolling flood ;
With just so bright, so red a hue
O'er all his head his tresses grew ;
Yet comely was his face the while,
And ever wore good-natured smile.
“ Welcome, bold knights ! ” he loudly cried,
As he the coming twain espied ;
“ Welcome to mirth, and wine and food,
And cheer your nature's weary mood.
These are the things that God has given
To us He has in exile driven,
So we can taste with mortal breath
The joys that cometh after death.
Mirth, food, good wine, are sacred gifts,
Each from the soul all sorrow lifts,
E'en pain to other quarters shifts,
When these by men are rightly used,
And neither one too much abused.”

XIII.

Deep drank King Arthur of the wine,
And praised the vintage of the vine,
And amply ate he of the food
Till he had eased his hungry mood.
But Beau de Main sat there the while
Nor joined in either laugh or smile,
And scarcely touched of food or wine
Until the king thus spoke : “ Resign
Thy sorrow for thy country's sake,
And of re-strengthening food partake,
So that thy arms within the fray
That surely comes with morning's ray

Be strong as they were yesterday.”
To which the sorrowing knight replied :
“ I have enough ; I ne’er denied
My nature rest, and drink and food
Sufficient for its weary mood ;
But when a boy my sire taught
The greatest sin that man e’er wrought
Was in vile gluttony to deal,
And eat too much at any meal ;
And that the too much use of wine
Makes all man’s faculties supine ;
Weakens his form, his limbs and brain,
Unnerves the blood in every vein.
So from gluttony I forbear,
Nor let it ’mongst my sins appear.”
To this the king returned : “ O chief,
Is there no solace for thy grief ?
I now with thine own words will teach
And show thee what thou can’t impeach.
Thou art a glutton, soul and mind,
Great as any in the land we’ll find ;
Though not in food and drink ’tis shown,
And pleasures unto mortals known,
But none like thee the crime can show ;
Thou art a glutton in thy woe—
As much a glutton in thy grief
As any gormandizing chief,
Who on a full-grown deer doth dine,
And swallows down a butt of wine,
Then spreads himself on earth supine,
Insensible as leaf on vine.
Thou art a glutton in thy woe ;
Rouse thee, man ! thy gluttony forego ! ”

XIV.

While thus together spoke the twain,
And Arthur strove to soothe his pain,
The rest around the festive board
Ate free, and down the red wine poured.
Theirs was a hale and jolly host,
And all drank deep to jest or toast.
Though he a king to battle trained,
Whose soul ne'er thought of fear contained,
Whose prowess had, in deadly fray,
Slain fiercest giants of his day,
Uprooted all their might and sway,
He led the way to feast and drink ;
And why should any hero shrink
Who sat around that festive board
To take example from its lord?
Like him, away all care they threw,
If any such their bosoms knew,
And laughed at danger, woe and pain,
And all that stalks in sorrow's train.
O'er coming ills they could not fret,
Those ills must first by them be met ;
And not till Fate the time had set
Would they release or void a debt.
Enough for the ills was the day
Those evils should master the way,
Eat, drink and be merry, for why
Not live happy and happily die?
Cling unto life, nor give up your breath
Till ye have had a tussel with death.
Show him you can die like a man,
With feet to the foe, in the van.
Though well they knew another day
Would bring them dreary toil and fray,

And many a knight who sat around
That board would there no more be found,
And would on earth be lying low
Before another day should go,
Yet recked they not; when came the time
For action, they, with wills sublime,
In daring hardihood of soul,
That could no force but death control,
Though foes would hew their gory way,
Do all that knight could do in fray,
Come victorious from the strife,
Or midst the slaughter yield their life,
As did the knights in olden time
While yet was Nature in her prime.

XV.

“The foe is sleeping on the coast,
And sentinels watch well his host;
Tristram and Launcelot de Lake,
Dagonet, Trol and Lamorake,
And many a hero trained in fight
Keep well their watch o’er him to-night.
No fear that he will ’mongst us rise
And take us by the least surprise.
So let us pass the night in mirth
As suits the heroes of this earth.
May ne’er this world of them be dearth
While women live to give us birth.
Women who love not the noble race
Are vagabonds on Nature’s face—
Yea, unto manhood sore disgrace;
Who lives apart from them, alone,
And never weds is but a drone,
A worthless lump of flesh and bone,
To Nature’s noblest joys unknown.

I love them all, both young and old,
E'en should their faults be manifold,
Their natures either warm or cold,
Their manners modest, coy or bold,
There's something good in every soul,
True kindness through their natures roll.
If men will half-way treat them right
They'd be all angels rosy bright.
Joy in his mate should man behold,
Ne'er see her frown, nor hear her scold.
Now ye all shall judge how Pellinore
Can sing; the song's a tale of yore—
Way back within the ancient time,
While yet were all things in their prime,
And all bloomed lovely in her clime,
Ere silvered were her locks with rime,
A castle stood midst waving wood
 High on an airy hill;
Its lofty halls had marble walls
 And built with choicest skill.
Its mighty lord had shoulders broad
 And limbs both lithe and strong,
And night and day a vast array
 Of knights did round him throng.
O'er all the earth his deeds of worth
 Were told in tale and song;
All those in need to him would speed,
 He righted all their wrong.
A daughter fair, with golden hair,
 Did unto him belong;
Her rosy cheek did health bespeak,
 And all of Beauty's charms;
A swan-like neck did her bedeck,
 And plump, round, snowy arms;

Her heaving breast like billow's crest
When o'er it foam wreaths ride,
And racing storms the sea deforms
And roll it in their pride.
No fairer brow from then till now
Did realms of beauty show ;
No fairer hand in Nature's land
Has ever bent a bow,
E'er drew its thong, all tough and strong,
And from it shaft did throw ;
No fairer hand on sea or land
O'er strings of harps have strayed,
And proved each string a sounding thing
That soothing music made.
Harmonies her soul and mind control,
In her all else eclipse ;
They danced apace o'er brow and face,
And breathed upon her lips ;
Beam'd from her arms and all her charms,
And e'en her finger tips ;
And from her tread that lighter sped
Than any fairy skips.
No sweeter voice did e'er rejoice
O'er human good and weal,
Sang nobler rhymes of olden times
When heroes all were leal,
And maidens fair could danger dare
And love for true knight feel.
Her sunny eyes, like clear, calm skies,
Were azure in their hue ;
And Faith of eld for mirror held
An eye of spotless blue.
Her fairy feet were light and fleet
As is the zephyr's breath

Sighing at night o'er lilies white,
When storms are hushed in death
Inez her name, and far her fame
O'er Christendom was blown ;
For deeds of good and hardihood
O'er earth the maid was known.
The chase loved she, o'er moor and lea
She sought the bounding roe,
O'er glen and hill, o'er stream and rill,
Where'er a maid might go.

XVI.

From lands of snow, where tempests blow,
And half the year is ice,
From Lochlin's land, whose frozen strand
The Polar blasts entice ;
The chilly soil that to no toil
Will yield the wholesome rice,
Where stately pines crown tall inclines
Instead of palms and spice ;
The barren clime that grows no lime,
No olive and no myrrh,
Where oaks are seen of stately mien,
Gum, poplar, elm and fir ;
But still each field will amply yield
The waving corn and vine,
The luscious grape, of perfect shape,
That gives the ruddy wine ;
The best of food, that cheers the mood
Of those who hunger know,
This northern clime, in summer time,
Will for its children grow ;
And when return the tempests stern
And falls the winter's snow,

Both corn and deer and best of cheer
Those northern children show ;
There roses grow and sweetly blow
When summer breathes in prime,
Violets bloom with sweet perfume
As in a warmer clime ;
There maidens dwell whose charms excel
Those where no snow is seen,
Whose hearts are pure and cased as sure
In mail of virtue sheen
As any maid that ever strayed
Through tropic lands of green,
And, as the maid of sunny glade
Their love is just as keen ;
All crafty wiles and subtle smiles
They spurn with stern disdain,
To those are proof as rocky roof
To winter's storm and rain ;
And there are found o'er all its round
Men just as brave and bold
In danger's time and battle's prime
As dwell in lands less cold,
Who fear no storm nor demon form,
Nor force of wizard's arm,
Who o'er their course their way will force
In spite of wizard's charm ;
Whose hearts are pure, whose loves endure
In spite of changing time,
And though all youthful charms have fled,
And every other passion dead,
That love is in its prime—
From out this land of frozen strand,
Where months the tempests blow,
The realm of pines and steep inclines,
Where half the year is snow,

A hero came whose mighty name
Yet still is known on earth;
He sowed the seeds of manly deeds,
Of prowess and of worth.
Suran his name, where'er he came
The oppress'd would round him throng,
For swift was he, on land or sea,
To smite down crime and wrong.
To Coreul's halls of marble walls
The Northern hero came;
His daughter fair, with golden hair,
Had brought that knight of fame.
Not as a knight arrayed for fight,
All sheathed in gleaming mail,
With spear and shield for listed field,
And trimmed for knight's assail,
He came to woo the lovely maid :
He came as bard, with harp in hand
For well he knew that maiden bade
No knight to wield the spear and brand
For her in horrid battle toil ;
She loved no sound of fierce turmoil,
The din of arms possess'd no charms
To win from her a smile ;
The trumpet's breath and field of death
Could not her soul beguile.
No knight on earth, whate'er his worth
In deadly feats of arms,
Could woo her smile or love the while,
Or win those lovely charms.
No blasts of war should ever sound
Throughout nor o'er the vast world round
If she but had her will ;
Strong peace should all the nations bind.

Unite them heart and soul and mind,
And love be their worst ill.

XVII.

All adamantine chains and bands,
Nor yet the hardest walls of stone
E'er forged or built by human hands
Since ever yet was Nature known,
Would all be vain to hold or chain
And keep atwain two human hearts
When love o'er them begins to reign;
Their souls are pierced with Cupid's darts.
The maid the Northern hero saw,
And on the bard with love she smiled;
And love his breakless chain did draw
Around the bard and Coreul's child.
Unknown to all within those halls
Their vows of love they daily swore,
And a mutual love enthalls
Thetwainand binds them moreand more.
But had the haughty Coreul known
The bard found favor in her eyes,
Though he was king of Lochlin's throne,
And there a bard but in disguise,
He swift had cut that wooing short;
For he had sworn a solemn vow
No prince or king of any court.
Who dwelt or ruled on Nature's brow
And that no man of mortal line
Should win his daughter for his bride;
That she a nun by vestal shrine
Should live, no matter what betide.
No pains and throes nor joys and woes
Attendant aye on wedded life

His child should feel, but should repose
In convent from all mortal strife.
A thousand men in armor bright,
And brave as ever couched a spear,
As ever drew the sword for fight
Or stemmed their foemen's fierce career,
Had come to woo the lovely maid ;
But all to woo had come in vain :
The stern sire the child obeyed,
And treated all with cool disdain.
In vain they came to woo a bride
By skillful feats in deadly arms ;
On such she smiled with scorn of pride,
For her grim battles had no charms.
But he who came with harp and song,
Who sang the minstrel's stirring lay,
And told of peace, themes that belong
To love alone, not blood and wrong,
How charging knights to carnage throng,
And reel amidst the grisly fray,
Within her woke a love so strong
It never knew through life decay,
But, night by night and day by day,
It ever grew with brighter ray.

XVIII.

'Twas on a warm and lovely morn,
The winds were blowing free,
And fast the wreaths of foam were born
Out of the travailing sea.
From off the land athwart the main
The stirring breezes blow,
And high in air like flying rain
Their sprays the billows throw.
Swift unto the favoring gales

Has Suran spread his snowy sails,
With Inez by his side ;
To Lochlin's realms of ice and snow,
Where half the year the tempests blow,
He bears his blushing bride.
In vain has Corcul's eager host
Pursued the lovers to the coast,
In vain they looking stand,
For there is not a single bark
To bear them o'er those waters stark
In sight of their command ;
Powerless all, they stand and eye
The youthful lovers onward fly
Still further from the land.
In vain does haughty Corcul call
Across the billows' rise and fall,
His daughter does not heed ;
Still onward o'er the rolling seas
They fly before the favoring breeze
Till from his sight they speed,
And nothing rises there to view
But rolling seas that whiter grew .
But still that sire's eager eye
And all his host that gathered nigh
There kept their searching gaze still cast
Upon the course that bark had past,
Until the shades of coming night
Obscured the waters from their sight,
Till nought they saw except the gloom
That swarthed the waters like a tomb,
And nought they heard except the flow
Of waters on the rocks below.

XIX.

As a flood that still onward sweeps
And bears its waves to unknown deep,
And eternal still the same appears,
Such is the onward stream of years.
It doth no sign of ceasing show,
And never shall an ending know.
And as the fleeting years of time
Drove on their chariot sublime,

From the union of that happy pair
Ten noble sons and daughters came,
All worthy of their noble name;

Worthy of the sire that they heir,
And all worthy of his loving dame.
When fleeting time had sped apace
And Coreul saw the noble race
That from that happy union grew
Aside his heart all anger threw.
True joy absorbed all grief and dole
And anger from his martial soul,
And dried them up, as doth the sun
The dews o'er which his beams are spun
And in his soul he blest the day
The bard had borne his child away;
Far nobler was to her that life—
A loving mother, joyous wife,
Her spirit ever teeming rife
With domestic blisses, void of strife;
With husband ever true and kind,
To every imperfection blind.
If such within her he did find.
Her home, with children playing round,
Was the blest convent she had found—
The noblest, purest, brightest shrine

E'er kneel'd before by human line ;
The grandest altar on the earth
Of godly purity and worth
Was in that home, and she the nun,
The sacred vestal, spotless one,
Who doth no single duty shun ;
Oh ! may her life forever run
In love and joy, as it begun,
And be a never clouded sun."

XX.

Here ceased the tale, but not a sound
Of thanks rose from the knights around ;
Not that the tale was dull and tame,
Or in the least way halt and lame,
From them no thanks or praises came ;
Not that any of that knightly throng
Loved not the sound of stirring song ;
It was not there from such a cause
That Pellinore won no applause.
But weary nature, not the wine
That glowed in bowls with ruddy shine,
Made hero's voice such silence keep,
For every knight was sound asleep.

XXI.

The stirring trump and braying fife
Awake the hosts to morn and strife,
And ere on hills the sunbeam shines
The ranks are form'd in battle-lines,
With some on foot and some on horse
King Arthur marshals all his force.
Far on the left down to the coast
The sturdy footmen take their post,
And there a circling column form,

Like clouds that gather for a storm,
Whose edges all with flame are bright
And cast around redundant light ;
With serried shields and bristling spears,
And axe that polished surface wears,
And mace that knotty head uprears,
A horrid line that ridge appears,
As forming there for deadly strife,
Midst war-horn's blasts and braying fife,
And all the sounds that wake to life
The knight for deeds with carnage rife.

XXII.

Far to the right the knights on horse
In one long column form their force ;
Far down unto the ocean's coast,
A gleaming line, they take their post,
And there wall in the Roman host.
Between the lines of foot and horse
The archers gather all their force,
And those who used the sling alone
That hurled with force the hissing stone
Made there a strong and goodly show
'Mongst those who bent the sounding bow.
And slingmen, archers, foot and horse
Still gradually close up their force,
Still closer wall the Romans round
At every move and stir and sound,
As some huge snake that starts his coil
Round prey, and closer brings the toil,
Still nearer, nearer drawing round
Until the crushing toil is wound,
So, circling all their Roman foes,
Those nearing lines of Britain close.

XXIII.

Meanwhile the Prophet of the Shrine
Had formed his ranks in battle-line ;
In phalanx placed and hollow squares
His host all o'er the field appears ;
With bristling spears and serried shields
They glitter dreadful o'er the fields ;
For over visors polished bright,
And morions of beamy light
And swords that flaming lustres show
The rising morning sunbeams glow,
Till all that Roman host became
A blinding sea of moving flame.
In centre of a phalanx line
On steed the Prophet of the Shrine
Rode, armed with only shield and sword,
And nowhere 'mongst his army broad
Another living steed was seen ;
All they had rode ere came yestreen
Had there been 'mongst the carnage slain,
Or by the daring Britons ta'en ;
So all on foot their columns move,
Their victory or death to prove.

XXIV.

As seas assault their rocky banks
The foes closed in on Arthur's ranks ;
As flies the spray when on the rock
The billows come with deafening shock
So shattered swords and splintered spears
Fly where the British line appears,
And dreadful sound the biow and thrust
Amidst the clouds of rising dust.

This way and that the columns reel
Amidst unceasing clang of steel ;
Yet still they fight and charge amain
And dye the earth with gory stain,
Till o'er the hills the rolling sun
Across the noonday line has run,
And scarce his ray can pierce the gloom
That shrouds that field of strife and doom.
But sometimes through the dust appears
Descending swords and thrusting spears,
And sometimes through the dust is seen
A morion of polished sheen,
And through the dark and stagnant air
No single breath of winds repair,
They not enough of strength would prove
The aspen's trembling leaf to move,
Nor it to slightest motion beat ;
And all the air with stifling heat
Is fill'd, around those armies cast
Oppressive as a furnace blast.

XXV.

Before that grisly phalanx line,
Where rode the Prophet of the Shrine,
Three mighty forms in arms appear,
And hew down man and shield and spear.
But vain their toil, the Roman ranks
Unceasing fill the ghastly blanks ;
Fresh warriors rise as from the ground,
And fast their Prophet circle round.
Though dread his sword King Arthur plied
And made the breaches grim and wide,
And though the sword of Beau De Main
Cut helm and head and man in twain,

And though the mace of Pellinore
Spread round a sea of brains and gore,
Yet still before those mighty Three
No Roman from the fight doth flee,
But good again they make their line,
Wall in the Prophet of the Shrine,
Round whom the arrows fly like rain,
But him to wound they fly in vain ;
Though clouds of shafts around him sail
Thick as the storm of driving hail
When clouds surcharged with heat arise
And roll with thunders through the skies,
Rush dreadful on the roaring gale
And scatter it o'er hill and dale,
Yet him to harm all vain they prove,
Of his not e'en a hair they move ;
Heedless of them, around he rides,
Unwounded every storm abides ;
His form from any hurt or harm
From arrow sped by mortal arm
Long, long ago did wizards charm.
Unwounded midst the flying spears
The hoary Prophet there appears,
While thus his battling host he cheers :
" Ye heroes from the land of Rome,
Where rises Vesta's sacred dome,
Where, surely placed in Nature's hand,
The Seven Hills eternal stand,
Whose flag has ever waved unfurl'd
In conquest o'er the spacious world ;
Sons of the race the she-wolf fed,
Sons of the race the she-wolf bred,
Your country's foes before you stand,
Strike and hurl them from the land ;
Strike deep with axe and spear and sword,

And o'er the isles of Britain broad
The sway of Rome shall be restored!
Strike! Britain is your prize;
Strike while the heated metal lies
Upon the anvil glowing warm
And it to targe or broadsword form.
Strike true, strike strong, nor pause nor wait,
But while 'tis hot forge well your fate;
The brave will heed, but coward fools
Will idle till the metal cools,
And every chance is void and lost
To heat again at any cost."
Scarce the last words his lips had past
When onward, like a sudden blast
That rises in a tropic clime,
Of warning gives no moment's time,
But onward sweeps upon its course
With lightning speed and untold force
With rattling thunders clears its path
Of all that dares to bar its wrath,
All things before it fall and die
And all behind uprooted lie,
A waste of devastation dread
Behind its horrid track is spread,
So sudden and so dreadful came
On steed a knight of slender frame;
All sheathed was he in clanging mail
As white as snow or frosted hail,
And full against the horrid line
That walled the Prophet of the Shrine
Secure from harm of spear or sword
That knight and horse made passage broad;
Backward to earth the Romans reel,
And 'neath those horse-hoofs crash their steel:
Then at the Prophet swift as light

With levelled spear rode on the knight ;
That spear through shield and Prophet tore,
Through heart and lungs the weapon bore,
And dripping red and grim with blood
Sent out behind a crimson flood.
To earth the stricken Prophet falls,
But vainly he for mercy calls ;
The strange knight draws his sword amain,
And cuts the Prophet's neck in twain ;
In air the hoary head is tost,
And, falling, midst the carnage lost.

XXVI.

Then dreader still the battle grew,
And shaft around unearthly flew,
Huge hissing stones in showers sail
And fly through air like blasts of hail ;
On every side sound storms of blows,
And everywhere the battle grows,
And on all sides the foes assail
The stranger knight in snow-white mail ;
Though for his aid those mighty Three
Give all their strength and prowess free,
Yet midst the storm of ceaseless blows
That still more busy round him grows
He falls upon the gory plain
And numbered 'mongst the ghastly slain.
Then shook the earth, and from the air
The shrouding clouds of dust repair ;
The sun looks through the moving gloom,
Reveals that field of strife and doom.
From earth before that stranger knight
The form of Merlin rose to sight,
A horrid groan the wizard made

As he that stranger knight surveyed,
Who there so still midst carnage laid,
All in his snow-white steel arrayed.
Merlin his banner then unfurled,
That flag the wonder of the world ;
Which had the skill of wizards wrought,
And it with strange devices fraught.
A thousand forms that standard shows,
And each with living instinct glows,
And divers awful shapes are seen
O'er all that magic banner sheen ;
And hues of gold, blue, red and green
Rise up those awful shapes between,
And waves that flag in windless air,
Where did no breath of breeze repair,
As though a roaring storm were there,
Through space was rushing anywhere.
Then spake the seer: "Ye knights renown'd
Ye heroes of the Table Round,
On, on! and make the Romans see
How ye will die or still be free!
On, on, ye knights! one onslaught more,
And tramp the tyrants in their gore,
Or drive them from your native shore,
And peace unto your land restore.
Ursula is of life bereft,
No child have I now living left.
'Tis she, the knight in armor white,
Who overthrew the Prophet's might.
Alas! that I should see the day
Grim death should seize her for his prey!
Oh, cruel Fate! it drives me wild
To view in death my child! my child!
My pride, my glory, my delight!
My sun by day, my star by night!

A peerless jewel of this earth,
Of matchless price and untold worth.
Oh, cruel Fate, to deal this blow,
And overwhelm me thus with woe!
To rive me thus with anguish wild!
Oh, my dead daughter! oh, my child!
But, oh! my child, thy deed sublime
Shall last unto the end of time;
Thy fame shall crown the poet's verse,
He'll o'er the world thy praise rehearse!
Though thou art whelmed by death, to whom
Has cruel Fate sent different doom?
All are its prey, the high, the low,
And victims all through life of woe.
Now, on, ye chiefs! avenge her death
To your last blow, last step, last breath.
On, on! for Merlin leads the way,
And ye shall conquer in this fray.

XXVII.

Then round their foes the Britons close,
And vainly they the charge oppose.
Down, down, amidst the mud and gore,
The Romans fall, to rise no more.
The knights on horse upon them ride,
And vainly they the shock abide.
Down, down upon the gory plain
'Neath steeds the foes are trod and slain.
Many a Roman knight doth stain
The horse hoofs with his reeking brain.
Down, down to earth they dying fall,
And vainly there for mercy call.
They fight till all the Roman hordes
Have sank beneath their dripping swords,

And not a Roman there is left
Who is not of his life bereft.
They fight till all their horde of foes
Are sleeping in a grim repose,
Till not a breathing foe is found
Amidst that reeking carnage round
Who will to Rome the story bear
How Arthur's knights can ply the spear;
How they in war the sword can wield,
All weapons of the battle-field;
How they can guard their native shore,
And keep her free forevermore;
How they tear down the flags unfurl'd
By all the tyrants of the world.

XXVIII.

There came a dread, unearthly sound,
That echoed all that land around,
And from the field of slaughter piled
Grim Merlin lifts his lifeless child,
Around her form his flag he drew,
And hid the maiden knight from view.
As this he did the startled air
Was filled with darkness dense and drear.
The gloom but for a moment's space
O'erwhelmed all Nature's smiling face;
But when it from the air withdrew
None maiden knight nor seer could view.
Which way they sped, o'er hill or dell,
No breathing mortal there could tell;
And ne'er again by mortal men
Have they been seen on hill or glen,
Or roam'd this world, to mortal ken.
Like comets dead, that no more burn,
They ne'er again to sight return.

XXIX

The sun is fading on the hill,
His parting rays glow on the rill;
The shades of eve creep soft and still,
And space the misty vapors fill,
And silence shrouds the field of death,
Not e'en the zephyrs breathe a breath;
A silence reigns o'er field and hill,
A silence stern and deep and still,
Which settles like a soothing balm
That throbbing pains of bruises calm.
With weary form and aching brow
Lie nigh all who are living now;
The strife of those two days has shorn
Their strength, with toil has all o'er worn.
Down on the field amongst the slain
They rest till they their strength regain,
Nor food they seek, the two days' toil
Their zest for food and drink doth soil;
Sweet sleep is all they ask or crave,
Best boon to flesh e'er Nature gave,
Soothes the senses, restores the breath,
Sweet Sleep, twin brother unto Death.

XXX.

The densest shades of sable night
Have hidden vale and mountain height,
No star within the sky is seen,
Black clouds lie earth and sky between;
Though Nature cast her pall of gloom
To shroud with darkness of the tomb,
Though here and there a feeble glow
Watch-fires did to-night bestow,
Yet all so pale they shone—their light

Was scarcely seen amidst the night ;
And scarce revealed amidst the gloom
Two kings beside a mossy tomb,
Where slept below in rest sublime
A mighty chief of ancient time.
All clad in armor stained with gore
Those kings kneel down the tomb before ;
One holds a grisly iron mace,
Whose brightness stains of blood deface ;
The other holds a mighty sword,
With blood spread o'er its surface broad.
One's Arthur of the Table Round,
One Pellinore, for strength renowned.
Kneeling, those heroes silent clasp
Each other's hand within their grasp :
To Him who rules the flood and storm,
The thunder rolls, the lightnings form,
Who spread the stars through endless space,
And gave the moon and planets place ;
Who made the sun, with all his beams,
And space through which his glory streams ;
He who from nothing formed this earth,
And who from dust gave man his birth ;
He who created light and life,
Filled earth with germs of vintage rife ;
The God who rules earth, space and sky,
Through whom all live, and breathe and die,
Those heroes breathed their heartfelt prayers
Thanked Him that victory was theirs.

XXXI.

Off from the field of reeking slain,
Beside a rock, is Beau De Main.
And there Griselda, worn and pale,
Sits, grasping still the Holy Grail.
She sits her chosen knight beside,

Her soul's own idol and its pride ;
His voice is breathing in her ear,
A voice she'd ever loved to hear,
And still shall love whate'er befall
The mortals on this earthly ball ;
Yes, love through every turn of fate,
Through every varied change and state,
Through every bliss and pain and woe
That mortal here can feel or know.

XXXII.

Why lengthen out my closing rhyme
With a long wooing at this time ?
The deathless Jew beside them drew ;
He well their thoughts and wishes knew ;
Their hands within his own he caught,
And both their hands together brought,
Some words he muttered on the air
That seem'd to sound like voice of prayer ;
And then he straight a blessing sped
O'er both the knight and maiden's head,
And spake he : " I pronounce ye wed ;
I am a Rabbi. What I have done
None shall undo while time shall run."
Then sudden from the gazing pair
He vanished, melted into air,
As doth the meteor's flash of light
That dies upon the brow of night,
And leaves no trace amidst the dark
To show where fell the glowing spark.
One by one each watch-fire's ray
In solid darkness past away,
Left not behind a single spark
To cheer the midnight damp and dark,
And gloom, all void of stir and noise,
Sank dense and stern o'er ARTELOISE.

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